



ANTILLEN REVIEW

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Hour of crisis

**Rethoric with
familiar sound**

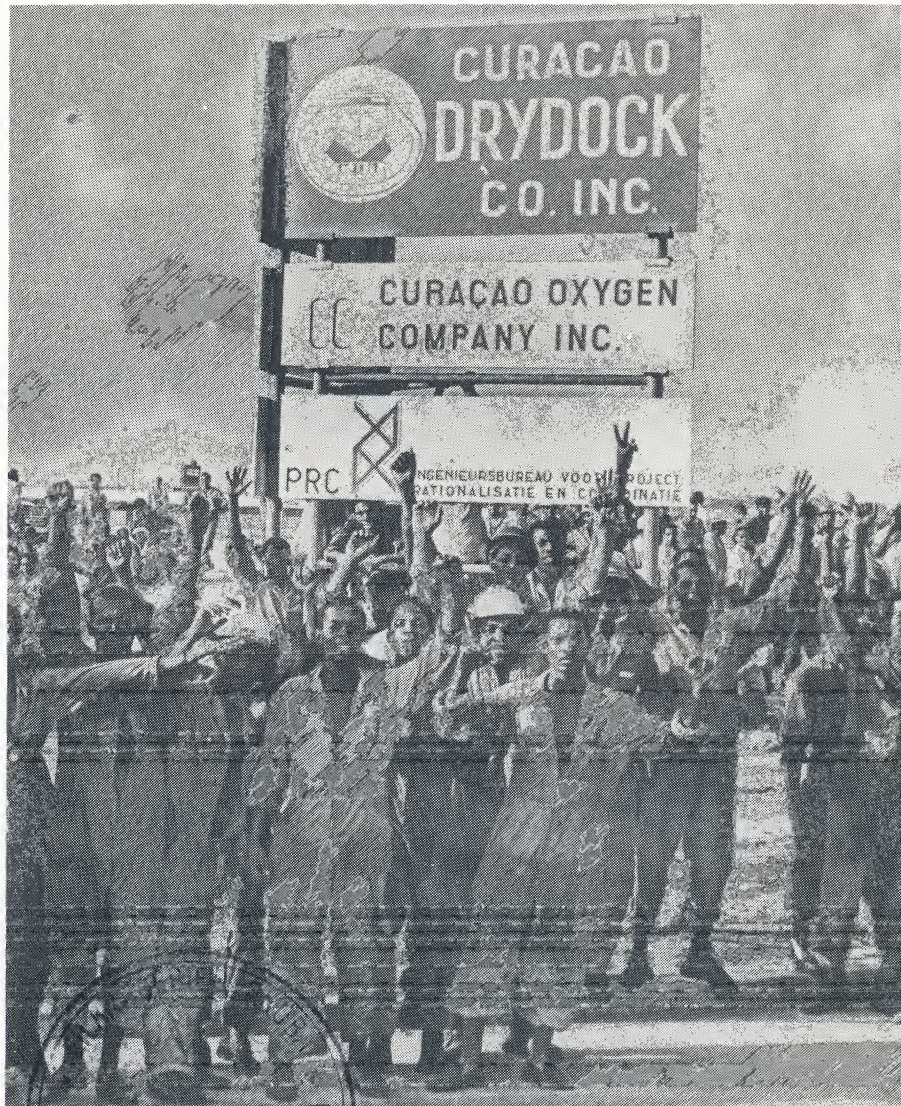
U.S. consul leaves

Economic survey

Antilleanization

**Do or Die
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FROM THE EDITOR



Editing this issue of Antillen Review has not been a pleasure. During the three years of the magazine's existence the editorial policy has been to look first of all for the positive and promising developments in the country. We have recorded many. This approach, we believe, has not hindered constructive and critical analysis. There is, we discovered, great satisfaction in looking for the good rather than gloating over the bad. But reviewing the past months there is little positive news to record. On the contrary, almost every aspect of the nation's life shows a downward trend. The dictates of objective and honest journalism force to report in somber tones. In writing this review, which certainly will not be pleasant reading, the motive, however, has not changed. We are still convinced that the country can overcome its present ills. In particular because they are to a much larger extent than many would let us believe of our own mak-

ing. And more so because there are still capable and courageous people around who could lead the people out.

Next an apology is warranted. This issue is late, very late. We have no intention to bother our readers with explanations, which may be valid to us but far from satisfactory to our subscribers. We sincerely offer our apologies. A serious effort will be made to catch up on the bi-monthly schedule before the end of the year.

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Hour of Crisis

The news during the summer months has been monotonously discouraging. Economically the country continued to slide backwards. If anything changed it was the speed of that down-hill movement. As a result the general mood turned gloomy. Fear for a possible outbreak of social unrest became a commonly shared sentiment. Not in the least because there is not even the slightest evidence of policies in the making that might level off the falling curve if not turn the tide. Instead, the general impression conveyed by the government is that the decision-making process has halted due to a lack of courage to take the much needed but highly unpopular measures, which might initiate a recovery. No longer can it be maintained that the Antilles are merely experiencing the tail effects of the world-wide recession. Endlessly postponing the reorganization of the over-staffed and unmotivated civil services, wasting time and energy by senseless political squabbling and the too heavy burden of a social welfare system developed after the West-European model, have rendered the country defenceless against bad times. Whether the country will pull through or be thrown into a period of turmoil may be decided in the coming weeks, when the outcome of negotiations about a wage freeze and lay-offs at several of the larger companies will be known.

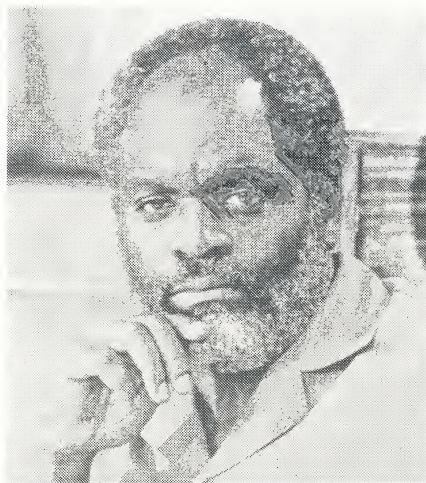
Tourism, one of the main sources of income of the Antilles, was still experiencing the aftermath of the devaluation of Venezuela's bolivar. Even in Aruba, one of the most popular tourist resorts in the Caribbean, shopkeepers are complaining about a steady decline of sales. In Curaçao the industry has come to a virtual standstill. The island was quoted as having suffered the greatest setback in tourism in the region. It should, however, be observed that the loss of the Venezuelan market does not constitute the real reason for this negative development. Most of the mainland neighbours came to the island on buying sprees rather than to enjoy the pleasures of a holiday resort. The sad fact is that Curaçao has little left to offer in that sense.

No new hotels were built during the last decade. Maintenance of those existing has, with the exception of one smaller one, been seriously neglected. Several of the larger hotels, moreover, were bought by the government for no other reason than to safeguard

employment, when the owners felt forced by the results to announce their closing down. A policy which has proved very costly to the tax-payer, as neither management nor marketing were conducted along the required professional lines. When the Venezuelan connection broke down the sorry state of Curaçao's tourism industry became blatantly evident. Whether the Island Government's recent decision to earmark NAf. 24 million for restoration of its hotels will be of any

help at all, may be seriously questioned. Not unless efficient management is given a chance and a sensible marketing policy is adopted, is there much hope for Curaçao's future as a tourism resort. The first will doubtless imply the laying off of a relatively large number of employees as well as setting much higher standards of service as presently considered adequate. The second prerequisite would mean putting an end to wild goose chases by travel-prone Deputies in dubious markets like Brasil and Argentina and calling in the assistance of professional advice from abroad. None of which measures carries favour with politicians, whose main objective is to keep their constituency happy by securing employment even if they have to use the tax-payers' money to keep the empty hotels fully staffed.

Martina: aged visibly



The situation at national carrier ALM differs from the above only in detail. Holding 96% of the shares the Government or rather the successive cabinets have used the company for electoral purposes, appointing their followers ▶

by the hundreds. Careful estimations say that at least 1/3 of the present number of employees not only could but should be laid off. Productivity and morale are at an all time low now that the company is virtually bankrupt. Neither the government nor the unions have up till now shown much willingness to go to the root of the problem and slim the company down to an acceptable size. The recent appointment of three Air Lingus employees in the top-management of ALM may prove to add much needed expertise, but will be of little avail if for short sighted political reasons real surgery is not conducted.

The same indecisiveness is exhibited in the case of the Curaçao Drydock Company (CDM). Mismanagement by the former own-

ers forced the government – again to secure the employment of 1200 workers – to take over the company earlier this year. It is generally agreed that the dockers are heavily overpaid, one if not the main reason why the company got into trouble. But in the six months of government-ownership no measures of any impact have been taken. The heavy financial losses of the CDM are compensated by government subsidies. A luxury the Antilles cannot possibly permit itself much longer.

During August one of the largest construction firms (ALBO) closed down, after the banks denied the company further credit. Although the public was kept in the dark about the real reasons of ALBO's difficulties, the Island

Government almost over-night voted to grant ALBO a Naf. 1 million guarantee in order to safeguard the jobs of the workers involved. Many doubted the wisdom of this decision. The fact that no information about the possible viability of the company was released, which might justify the government's action, feeds the suspicion that again petty political motives have the upperhand. Comparisons with Chrysler in the USA do not seem valid, as there is no evidence of proper research into the company's affairs and management nor of any stringent conditions ALBO will have to adhere to. Most observers considered the decision an at random emergency measure, setting a dangerous precedent.

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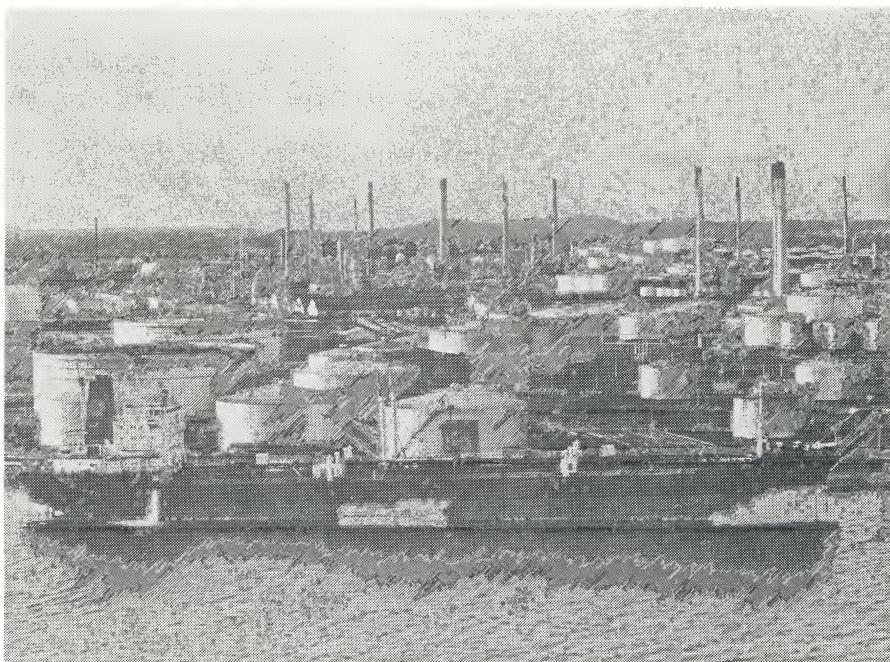
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agement announced in no uncertain term, that wage increases and cost of living compensation as stipulated by the existing labour agreement would be out of the question. On the contrary a wage cut was proposed. It is rumored that the management and the unions will agree to a freeze of the present situation, although they still seem to be at loggerheads. As Shell has in the past often set the trend, such an agreement would be the best news the island has heard for a long time.

It might also explain why the government has been so slow in taking measures to get the economy back on its feet. From a short-time political perspective it is obviously advantageous when SHELL takes the lead. The ever more vocal nationalistic and leftist groups, however, will certainly not miss the opportunity to clamour that again a multi-national is dictating the country its labour conditions. A firm attitude on the part of its political leaders would, no doubt, save the nation a lot of possible unrest in the future. There is also little doubt that the trade-unions would go along with the government at least a fair part of the way, as they favour the present coalition under Mr. Martina above any alternative.

Unfortunately fear for turmoil resulting from a further increase of the ranks of unemployed dominates the political scene, paralyzing the system and prompting individual politicians and parties to devote their energy to safeguard their own standing with the electorate rather than to serving the common good. Comparisons with Jamaica



Shell setting trend?

under Manley, as drawn by observers, do have a point.

Firm and decisive government is further hampered by the continuing tension between the respective islands, in particular between Aruba and Curaçao. Although a full and workable agreement was reached about future relationships at the Round Table conference in April last, Aruba's leading party MEP does as yet not show any willingness to co-operate in a constructive manner towards the agreed objectives. Upon his return from Miami (see Aruba) Mr. Betico Croes announced his party's readiness to join the national government on the condition that Aruba's minority party PPA would first have to leave the coalition. Ignoring the fact that his party made a last minute turnabout after all Antillean parties including the MEP had signed a protocol earlier this year outlining policies to be executed by an all party government, he claims that his party was left out in pre-

ference of the smaller Aruban parties. The AVP, which contributed two exceptionally capable ministers to the cabinet, realizing the harm Mr. Croes could inflict on its standing with the Aruban electorate by his distorted reasoning, stepped down before his return. The remaining Aruban coalition partner PPA decided to adhere to its first choice, the principle of co-operation which was in fact accepted by all parties.

But this firmness may well have to be paid for heavily at the next elections. Many fear that a resulting further increase of MEP power would not serve the interest of democracy on the island.

On the atonal level it means that once again much energy and time has to be devoted to the 'Aruban question'. Leaving Mr. Croes' party out of government will cause a further deterioration of relationships and offer opposition parties on the other islands (read: Curaçao) plenty of opportunity to at least nettle the gov- ▶

ernment. Inviting Mr. Croes in does not offer much hope for stable government either, as he has openly declared to have no interest in the welfare of the nation, but only in what Aruba can get out of such a move before entering status aparte in 1986.

Bonaire's Mr. Abraham (see AR.vol.3 no 4) has already grasped the opportunity to increase the influence of his island (and himself) offered by this situation. His very visible presence at the occasion of Mr. Croes' return to Aruba leaves little doubt about the role he intends to play. Although the majority leader in his island he has no representation in the national parliament due to the double system of elections. His present maneuvering is clearly

aimed at the future and has by implication already a de-stabilizing effect.

Prime-minister Martina, who is generally considered to be the only one in a position to steer the country through the present crisis and prevent the outbreak of disturbances, is on top of all this also faced with contending fractions within his own party, MAN. Marxist oriented theorists are reported to have engaged the more pragmatic social democrats in a struggle for power. This inward struggle is reflected in the government's ambiguous attitude towards free enterprise on the one hand and movements of an anti-capitalistic nature, linking class-struggle ideas to the concept of Antillianization on the

other hand.

Mr. Martina, who aged visibly over the past year, is certainly not to be envied. The mandate given to him by the electorate in an overwhelming manner was clear and concise: put the nation's affairs in order.

As the present crisis is nearing its decisive hour, he should give up trying to reconcile and govern at the same time. The authority and the measure of confidence he still enjoys, are such that he need not shrink back from taking a firm hold of the nation's helm. The people's mandate was given him and only in a derivative sense to his party. To his record of intergity and modesty should now be added the courage of decisive leadership. ■

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Rhetoric with a familiar sound



If anything the return of Mr. Betico Croes last August to *his* Aruba was a well staged affair. At least there was drama galore. Mr. Croes, who had been wounded by a shot from a policeman's gun a week before the April elections, was welcomed back from convalescing in Miami by thousands of his followers. Although there is no thread of evidence that the almost fatal bullet was fired with the express purpose of killing Mr. Croes, the crowd cheered him as both a hero and a martyr. No wonder. After three months of having been bombarded with mind boggling arguments by the victim himself and his political cronies suggesting a sinister conspiracy, scores of Arubans were by now deeply convinced of their leader belonging to the category of Kennedy, King and the Pope. Mr. Croes upon arrival acted accordingly. Having descended from the private jet which brought him home, he knelt on the tarmac and kissed the Aruban soil. Eager camaramen zoomed in on the large cross hanging down from his neck. Minutes later Croes told the assembled crowd that God himself had spared his life with a view to Aruba's holy cause. He next proceeded to accuse the Central Government of having had a hand in what he described as an intentional attack on his life. In other countries, Croes stated, the police is there to protect politicians from such onslaughts. Not so, he said, in the Antilles. A fact(?) which had forced him to appoint his own bodyguards.

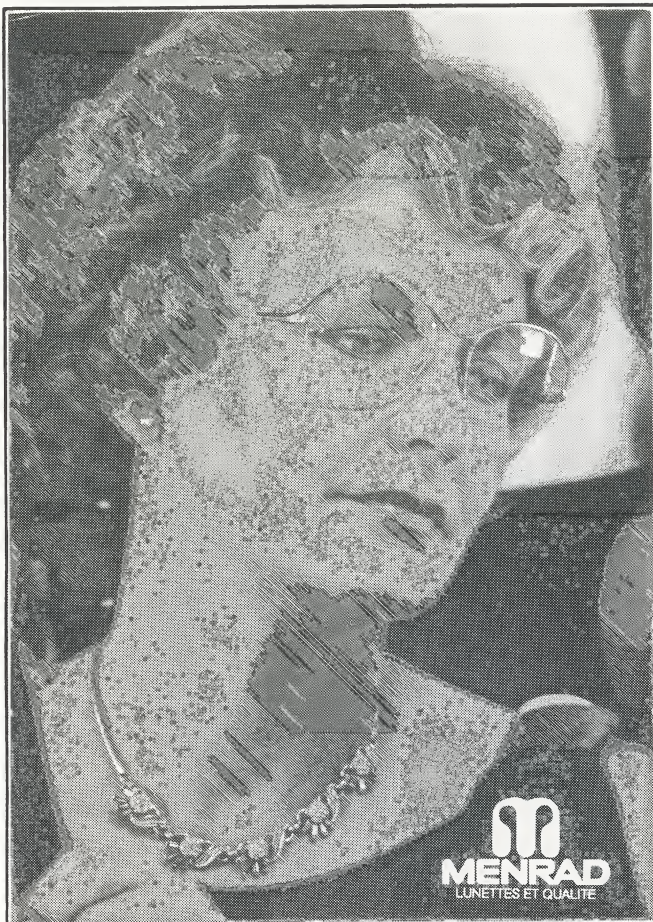
Although Mr. Croes' hour long speech contained many references to the principles of democracy, observers could not help but note that all the ingredients for a not so very democratic future were there: a fanatic crowd believing their leader unreservedly, God granting Croes' policies absolute authority and the beginning of a party bound militia. Drama galore which may easily turn into tragedy!

In the months before Mr. Croes' return all appropriate steps with regard to the shooting had been taken. An official investigation was ordered to determine the exact nature of what had happened and whether the policeman in question should be prosecuted. As the hearing of testimony by Mr. Croes himself had to be postponed till

after his return from Miami, the examining magistrate could not be expected to reach a conclusion much before the end of September. Mr. Croes and several prominent members of his party nevertheless demanded on many occasions the imprisonment of the officer pronouncing him guilty of attempted murder. The argu-

ments were dressed up in such a way that any possible diverging conclusion by the magistrate will most certainly be interpreted by many Arubans as politically motivated i.e. as directed against the MEP and by implication against Aruba. A manner of reasoning which is certainly not conducive to upholding respect for law.

A seemingly more responsible approach by the MEP was exhibited when one of its representatives in parliament exercised his right to demand an interpellation of the Minister of Justice. However when the date fixed for the occasion approached no questions had been forwarded. A postponement of the particular session was granted and shortly before the return of Mr. Croes the interpellation took place. In contrast to the insinuating questions raised and the wild statements made by MEP-politicians, the Minister of Justice, Mr. Hector Gonzales, who belongs to one of Aruba's opposition parties, replied in a most sober and objective manner, taking great care not to interfere with the magistrate's responsibility. Mr. Gonzales was praised by many for his unemotional and fair presentation of the facts known to him at that moment. Facts which at least rule out all suggestions of a ▶



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conspiracy. Whether the police officer acted in such a way that prosecution is warranted, remains a matter to be decided by the examining magistrate.

Mr. Croes in a number of subsequent speeches and statements continued to ignore these facts, showing an utter disregard for the independence of the judge. When it came to testifying before the magistrate Mr. Croes' version of what happened was reportedly backed up only by a handful of his most fanatic followers.

The MEP not only used the incident to stir up feelings of antagonism in Aruba against the Central Government and more in particular against Curaçao, but also to discredit all opposition to the MEP in Aruba itself. The accusation that the Central Government is at least by implication responsible for the unfortunate gunshot fired by a Curaçaoene(!) affects the two Aruban opposition parties, which at that moment in time took part in the coalition cabinet, in a most serious manner. The barrage of rhetoric which followed the incident was meant to make them look like traitors of the Aruban cause.

But Mr. Croes and his party bosses went even further when they pointed an accusing finger at the authorities on the island, in particular at the Lieutenant Governor Mr. Pedro Bislip. It should at this point be remembered that the shooting took place during a clash between a large crowd of MEP sympathizers (including Mr. Croes) and the police, which was trying to disperse the former, as they were holding an unlawful car parade. Permission to do so had been refused in accordance with the agreed principle that only one such parade would be allowed on any particular day. One of the opposition parties had applied before the MEP and had been given the green light. The MEP apparently felt powerful enough to proceed notwithstanding. Afterwards they claimed that the authorities had given an oral OK. This was firmly denied by Mr. Bislip. Not so very long ago still a prominent member of the MEP and personal friend of Mr. Croes, Pedro Bislip now found himself in the position of being accused of mishandling his position. What Mr. Croes in fact was saying was that the MEP is the law by virtue of being the majority party on the island. Mr. Bislip, however, did not budge an inch, which prompted Mr. Croes to introduce a motion of no-confidence in the island parliament. When this body met mid-September to



Kelly



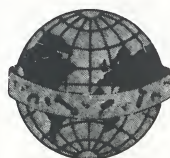
Bislip

vote on the motion there appeared to be no quorum as three MEP representatives were absent. One of them, Mr. Charro Kelly declared publicly that his christian conscience forbade him to vote in favour of such a motion!

The staunch attitude of both Mr. Bislip and Mr. Kelly may well signify the beginning of a (last minute) turn-about in Aruba. It should be noted: not with regard to Aruba's desire for status aparte. That issue is beyond any question favoured by far the majority of Arubans, whether they vote MEP or not. But what it might indicate is that Mr. Croes obvious bid for absolute power, is not going to be allowed

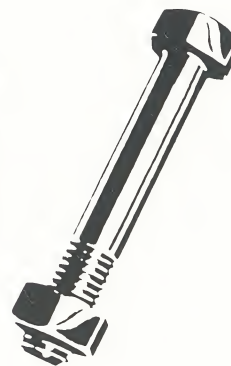
realization. It should on the other hand not be underestimated how deeply Mr. Croes and his closest allies are entrenched in the Aruban corridors of power.

Mr. Croes, who is not yet fully recovered from his wounds - part of his intestines are still not replaced inside his body - will no doubt use all his considerable charisma to convince the people that anti-Aruban powers are trying to capitulate on his infirmity. As on many occasions before he may well succeed. His rhetoric may have an all too familiar sound to many watching from afar, in Aruba itself only a minority has hitherto recognized the tune he is playing. ■



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Cherishing the gift of nature

by H. Linkels

Considerations of an ecological nature rarely come first. In Bonaire they did, much to the present-day advantage of man and beast alike. And what is more: there is every reason to expect that the island will keep up its reputation of being one of the last 'unspoiled spots of nature' for many years to come.

Larger than its well-known sister island Aruba and much richer endowed with natural beauty, the thinly populated flamingo island catered for many years to the recreational needs of both Aruba and Curaçao. Slowly its reputation as a breeding place of rare species of birds and as a paradise for scuba diving spread. Visitors from both the American continent and Europe began to arrive. Diving in particular developed rapidly into an industry. Presently it is estimated that 70 to 80 thousand visits are paid yearly by scuba fans to the unique coral reefs. However welcome they are, they can still unintentionally cause irreparable damage by disturbing the sea-bed and touching the coral. A well developed policy of preservation, however, has enabled the authorities to take the appropriate measures in time.

Parks

A first step in the direction of such a policy was set in 1956, when the Caribbean Marine Biological Institute (CARMABI) was established in Curaçao with the purpose of researching the Caribbean sea, in particular around the islands of the Netherlands Antilles. A second, no less important, step was the establishment of the Foundation National Parks (STINAPA) in 1963. The first commission of the newly founded organization was to safeguard the breeding places of flamingoes on Bonaire against the expansion of the salt-industry. In due course its activities led to the establishment of a 6000 hectares large national park, presently the home not only of a large colony of flamingoes but also of some

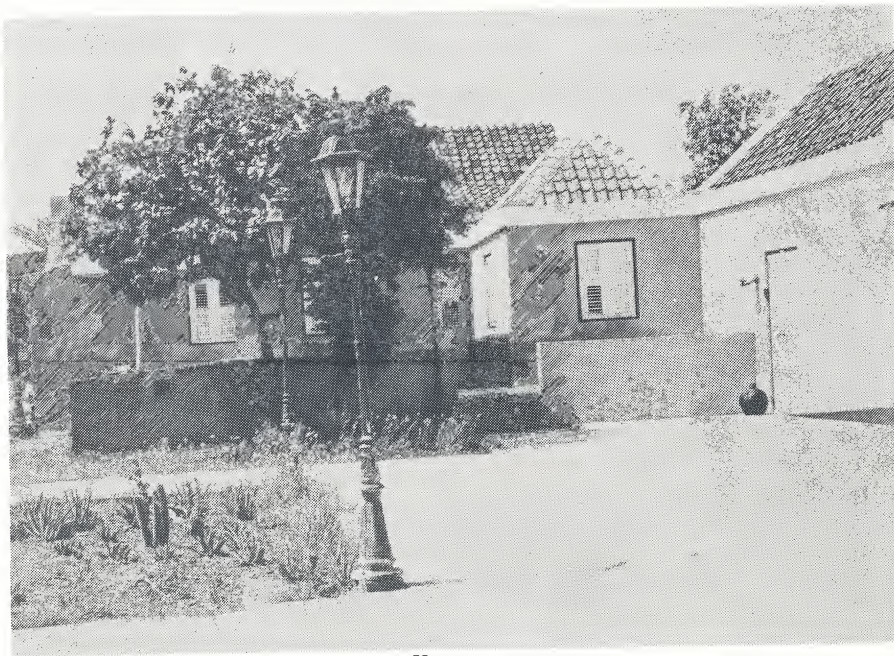
very rare species of birds like the almost extinct Amazone parrot. Scientific and financial assistance was given by the Union for conservation of Nature Resources (IUCN) and the World Life Fund (WLF0). A generous gift of the WLF enabled Bonaire to create a National Marine Park unequalled in the entire Caribbean region.

Precious

A conservation policy developed,

other Caribbean islands. Diving for the precious commodity became a rage and prices went sky-high. Research, however, pointed out that the coral grows at the extreme slow pace of $\frac{3}{4}$ millimetre a year. Consequently the Island Government of Bonaire forbade the harvesting of black coral in 1976.

The impact of the earlier mentioned CARMABI on Bonaire's preservation policy has been considerable. In 1980 two marine biologists, who had just completed their studies in the Netherlands, were put at the disposal of the islands's government by the Institute. The two scientists, Mr. Ton van het Hof and his Antillean counterpart Mr. Eric Newton, became the driving force towards the creation of the Marine Park, which recently inaugurated is already acquiring fame both



Karpata

which does raise some legitimate questions. Spear-fishing, the possession of and trade in the Amazone parrot, diving for black coral and several kinds of coral zoophytes are now prohibited. Measures which may come across as highly sympathetic to nature-lovers, but which at the same time cut off a lucrative source of income for the islanders. Black coral is a good case in point. This fan-shaped coral, much in demand in the gem industry, found around the island, has a much better quality than those found in the waters around several of the

in the Americas and Europe.

Although this park is only one of the results of Bonaire's ecological policy, it speaks most to the imagination. Several ecological organizations like the Ecology Conference of the Caribbean Conservation Association and the Seminario Internacional de actividades Submarines del Caribe held their meetings on the island. No doubt the professional approach of the Bonairean authorities helped by the Dutch government, the WLF and the IUCN explains this international interest.



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Timely

But far and beyond that it is the beauty of the under-water world itself which attracts people to the Flamingo island. In spite of the inconvenience of limited air connections scuba diving tourists keep coming in increasing numbers.

This heightened interest may be a most welcome development from an economic point of view, it does pose a threat of over-exploitation of nature, according to Mr. Ton van het Hof. "In 1976 only one scuba-diving centre could be found in Bonaire. Now there are already six in existence! A development which forced us to be even more careful in preserving nature's gift. One of the reasons to establish the under-water park".

The project was started in 1979. In more sense than one it was an exceptional undertaking. Not only because the entire coastline from the sea surface to a depth of 60 meters was declared a national park, but because for a change this was done in time. Damage to the underwater world was still minimal. Well-known species of reef fishes like the grouper had not yet been extinguished by spearfishers like happened in Curaçao. Even now the fish around Bonaire know no fear of men and for many tourists it is an astounding experience that they swim up to the divers and eat bread from their hands.

Research

A next and quite logical step was the establishment of an ecological centre. Research for the purpose of keeping Bonaire's largely untouched environment intact as well as offering scientists from abroad a chance to acquaint themselves with phenomena becoming rare elsewhere would thus be made possible. In tune with Bonaire's overall conservation policy a beautiful but badly dilapidated mansion of historical value was decided upon. The Dutch Government generously provided most of the required capital and the restoration of 'landhuis Karpata' was officially started by Queen Beatrix in 1980 when she visited the island.

Last year Karpata became available

for the intended purpose, housing a library, an exposition hall, lecture room, several aquarium halls, a laboratory, a darkroom for the development of both black-and-white and colour films, all the required diving facilities as well as a number of guest-rooms for visiting scholars.

The well equipped centre guarantees a continuance of the professional approach to environmental issues in the future. The responsibility for formulating ecological policies has since the departure of Dutch biologist van het Hof been entrusted entirely to Eric Newton, a graduate of Leiden University. Mr. Newton brims over with ideas of how to tackle the job. He envisages the creation of an environmental body, which should co-ordinate a number of functions: the management of the National Parks, the organization of seminars for divers, training of guides, co-ordination of environmental impact statements, research for the purpose of policymaking, the up-dating of documentation and providing adequate facilities for scientific research. Mr. Newton believes in close co-operation with the government, in particular those services concerned with tourism and environment. "One of the first tasks at hand" he states "is promoting the right kind of motivation amongst the young people by means of the educational system." He pleads for the appointment of a colleague with teaching qualifications to take charge of this task in Bonaire's schools.

Newton also mentions the urgent need to arrive at an agreement about the nomenclature, as several species of birds and fishes are described with different names on the respective A-B-C islands.

Progress

A continual and great concern is the relationship between the economic development needs of the island and the priorities of environmental policy. Ten years ago approval was granted for the construction of an oil terminal close to the breeding grounds of the flamingoes, the famous Goto lake. The same company (BOPEC) has now applied for permission to build a small refinery as well. Co-operation on environmental issues between

BOPEC's management and Newton has been excellent in the past, according to the biologist, who would like to see the drawing up of a contingency plan at short notice in order to be able to react quickly and efficiently in case of an oil spill.

In the relatively short time Newton has been working in Bonaire he has on several occasions been confronted with projects, which might have a negative effect on the environment. A most notable example: the disastrous Flamingo Paradise project. In order to create a luxurious holiday resort consisting of villa's surrounded by canals, an opening towards the sea was created by blowing up part of the nearby coral reef. There is little doubt that this caused the groundwater in the nearby area to turn brackish. An enormous increase of sediment is also proved to have resulted.

In the meantime the project was stopped because of financial default. Argues Newton: "environmental impact statements must be given a legal footing as is customary in the USA and Europe". The ecological centre Karpata could contribute considerably to arriving at policy decisions properly balancing the economic and environmental aspects of such projects. "An extra advantage would be" according to Newton, "that project-developers would be forced to undertake preliminary research of a much more scrutinous nature than in the past, which in turn might well diminish the chances of being left with White Elephant projects like the failed Flamingo Paradise project.

Mr. Newton believes in aiming at the abovementioned balance of interests. He does not belong to that extreme brand of environmentalists who regard every compromise as a defeat for the holy cause. What is needed is an integrated policy carefully weighing the advantages and disadvantages of projects, he states. Fortunately such an attitude was developed in an early stage in Bonaire, spelling hope for the future of the beautiful and untainted island. ■

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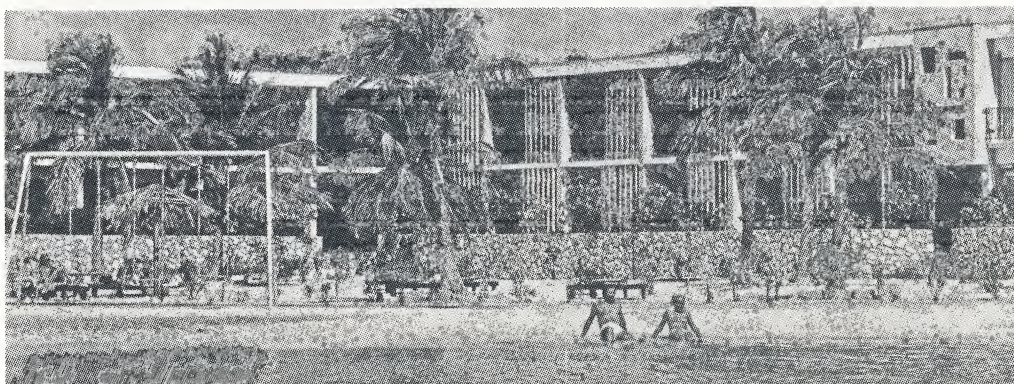
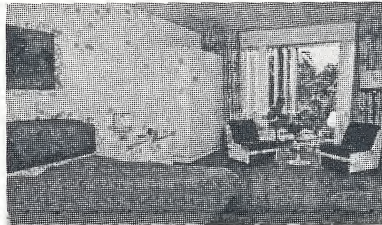
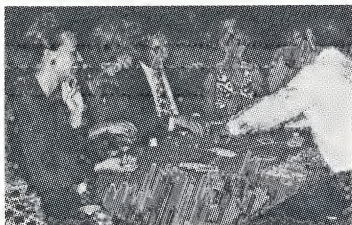
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Moderate	\$ 46,00	\$ 58,00
	Triple	Quadruple
Standard	\$ 65,00	\$ 76,00
Moderate	\$ 69,00	\$ 81,00

HIGH SEASON:

December 16, 1983 - April 10, 1984.

	Single	Double
Standard	\$ 68,00	\$ 80,00
Moderate	\$ 74,00	\$ 86,00
	Triple	Quadruple
Standard	\$ 103,00	\$ 114,00
Moderate	\$ 109,00	\$ 120,00

The room rates are inclusive one American Breakfast. A 10% service and 5% government tax should be added.

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How solid a rock?

The picture the largest of the six Antillean islands offered these past months was far from encouraging. The economic recession not only increasingly jeopardized the employment of many, it also hit home the unpleasant truth that both government and private enterprise have seriously failed in planning and management. The role of the trade-unions, moreover, could not by any standard be called constructive. Political parties continued their habitual efforts to steal a march on each other rather than join forces to ward off possible disaster. In the margin of Curaçao's society anti-capitalistic groups raised their voice ever more loudly to the tune of colonialism and oppression. As a result a general feeling of apprehension pervaded society. The most people seem to be hoping for is escaping a repetition of the '69 riots.

The only cheerful news was the announcement of Curaçao's Electrical Company (KODELA) that last year's books show a profit of Naf. 7 million. It did little, however, to raise the spirits on the island. With an eye on their stiff electricity bills few citizens could muster any appreciation for this feat. It was observed, moreover, that the combined losses of industry and business incurred because of regular power failures most probably equalled KODELA's profit figure. What in better times might have been good news was now generally met with scepticism and irritation. All the other news was downright bad.

Shopkeepers, in particular in the city, witnessed a further slackening of business. When earlier this year the crowds of eagerly buying Venezuelans stopped coming because of the devaluation of the bolivar, large scale 'sales' created the im-

age of business as usual. But as tourism failed to pick up the city became alarmingly quiet. More so as also cruise tourism dropped considerably. In August only 8 cruise ships visited the island. The same month last year the number was 12. The total of cargo and passenger ships dropped from 132 in August '82 to 108 in the same period this year. Altogether only 536 ship berthed in Curaçao's harbour during that month, 114 less than in 1982!

At the Curaçao Dry Dock, one of the largest employers on the island, things did not look any better. Not only because business was still very slow, but much more serious because a stalemate between the management and the union frustrated any effort to reorganize the company and get it back on its feet. In order to safeguard the jobs of CDM's 1200 employees the Government took over the company from

its former owners when it headed for bankruptcy earlier this year. Vast amounts of the taxpayers' money have in the meantime been poured into CDM to keep it afloat. A policy which may not prove to be all that constructive in the end. Proposals to cut wages, on average the highest in the island, and slim down the company have met with fierce opposition by the union. Union leader Karel THIELMAN has threatened that his men will march against the new owner if the proposed measures are indeed put into effect. Action which might well trigger off large scale turmoil. It is moreover public knowledge that the opposition is fanning the passions hoping to topple the present coalition. A most irresponsible attitude as disturbances of any extent will mean a deathblow to the island's faltering economy. Hoping to forego unrest by continuing to give in to the union's obstinacy will in the end prove to be just as fatal. Whether common sense will prevail, will be known within a matter of weeks.

SHELL's management announced early September that it will take economizing measures, regardless of whether a new labour agreement is reached with the union, by October 1. Understandably the union reacted far from pleased. Leader Koeyers, however, stated that possible actions would be confined to the plant itself and not be carried to the streets. ▶

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Aware of the explosive situation on the island SHELL's union FTPK is obviously not prepared to put the spark to the tinder. This should be interpreted as a hopeful sign.

Less encouraging is the stance taken by one of the unions at ALM, the nation's much troubled carrier. Also here government ownership (see National) seems to have created a dangerously unrealistic manner of thinking amongst at least part of the company's personnel. In particular the ground staff is obstructing wage-cuts and lay-offs. A threat of imminent action has been voiced.

It should in all fairness be observed that the government in general and more in particular the political parties are at least as much to blame for the prevailing lack of common sense as some of the labour unions. A long history of patronizing political sympathizers and subsidizing the government owned companies has created a situation which is now at last back-firing.

With a view to these worrisome developments the performance of the island's government cannot be called impressive. It has certainly not taken the lead in trying to turn things around. The only issue on which it spoke out in force was of minor importance and, moreover, badly handled. Overreacting to a statement made by Bonaire's majority leader, Mr. Jopi Abraham, accusing Curaçao of using Bonaire as a dumpingplace for undesirable characters - Mr. Abraham was referring to the

stationing on Bonaire of the policeman who was involved in the shooting of Mr. Croes of Aruba - it decided to deny Bonaire a totally unrelated request for a pilot for its harbour services. The indignation of Curaçao's politicians was certainly justified in as far as Mr. Abraham's remark was completely besides the point. Whether the policeman in question is guilty of any wrong demeanour, is a matter the inquiring magistrate will have to decide upon. Assinging police personnel is, moreover, a national affair. But to punish Bonaire for a remark made by one of its politicians, is as much besides the point as the remark itself. More to the point is probably the observation that Curaçao's politicians welcomed the chance to divert the attention from the economic problems to an emotional issue. That at least would explain the disproportionate amount of time and energy they devoted to a statement which was obviously made by Mr. Abraham to boost his own standing with the Bonairean electorate, and not in the least to please Betico CROES for whom he seems to have a rather uncritical admiration.

On a different level a far-reaching and most important decision was taken by the island council early September. As from August 1984 education in the first grades of primary school will be given in papiamentu. The implications are manifold.

Educationalists expect that Curaçao's youngsters, the majority of whom speak no other language at home, will do better at school as a result. Even if they have to turn to another language at a later stage it is argued that the first three years are most important for learning to handle abstract concepts. No doubt, it helps to do so in one's own native tongue.

On the other hand Dutch, which is already rapidly on its way out as a spoken language in the Antilles, will become even more obsolete. This may cause serious problems as all advanced education is structured according to the Dutch system allowing students entrance to institutes of higher education in The Netherlands.

Also one of the attractive aspects of the Antilles for internationally oriented firms - namely that most Antilleans are multilingual - might be lost if not at the same time a strong accent is placed in education on both Spanish and English.

The strong drive for creating an own identity, should be balanced by the dictates of common sense, which require that the island develops a high degree of ability to serve international business.

For the same reason the very real danger of social unrest, created by the decline of the economy should not be underrated. Curaçao cannot possibly permit itself to frighten off the international business and financial community. ■

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Quality at media further jeopardized

Whatever Curaçao's 160.000 inhabitants may lack it is not a choice of media. Six daily newspapers, five radio stations and a television station appears to be ample if not slightly extravagant. The almost simultaneous announcements that a licence for a sixth station has in principle been granted and that an official report on the media advising against any further increase of the media body is now before the government for consideration, reveal by virtue of their inherent contradiction to what extent the information-issue is being taken seriously. It simply is not. This in spite of the persistent flow of complaints about the quality of much the media are offering the public.

Unfair

The complaints have a point and are unfair at the same time. The relatively large number of daily papers is at least partly caused by the multilingual situation. Taking into account that democratic requirement of diversity, 4-5 papers would be an absolute minimum. But the obvious financial limitations posed by the relatively small readership and advertising market prohibits the appointment of adequate editorial staffs. Adequate at least in numbers. As a result most papers offer little more than the daily news. Background information analyses in depth, cultural reviews etc. are only offered occasionally by one or two papers.

The radio stations, deriving their income from the same market as the press and TV, have little more leeway for indulging in quality broadcasting.

The aforementioned decision by the government to permit yet another radio station to commence broadcasting will certainly not contribute towards improving the situation.

Questionmark

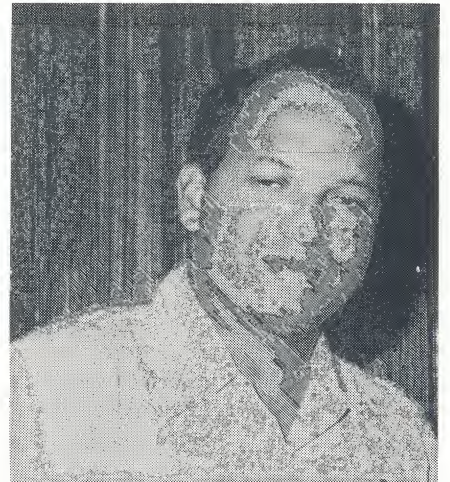
A decision which must at the least be labelled 'curious'. In 1981 the govern-

ment appointed a commission to analyse the country's media situation and draw up outlines for policy making. The need for such a study had increasingly been felt both by responsible media people and the government itself. The extremely liberal approach in the past had clearly permitted things to get out of hand. The most telling example is Aruba, where presently 8 radio stations are serving a population of 60.000. Some of them do not rise above juke-box standards.

In 1977 the government invited media expert Th.H. Oltheten, managing-director of the Dutch Government's Publishing House, to study the field and advise it accordingly. His report, published a year later, did much to foster awareness that, while safeguarding the basic principles of democracy, government action could not be avoided. With a view to the delicate nature of any official media policy, the government wisely decided to ask for further analysis before determining policies. On September 6 of this year the commission presented its report to the Minister concerned. To everyone's surprise and the dismay of many the news concerning a sixth station in Curaçao was released in that very same week.

Report

A first breakdown of the commission's report in the Amigoe Newspaper impresses the reader for its balanced and in depth reasoning. It pleads for the development of a media policy which would ensure serving the information need of the population in a more adequate way. It clearly states that freedom of the press and pluriformity should be the leading principles. It also concludes that besides introducing criteria regarding technical and content quality official policies should aim at creating a healthier financial climate for media operations. Suggestions, however, which have been made before on many occasions and up till now have been consistently shelved.



*Min. Rudy Ellis:
granted permit*



*Angel Job:
starting 6th station*

Negative

It should in all fairness be observed that the media themselves have persistently opposed all efforts by the government to improve the situation. Fear for possible restricting the freedom of the press has been the acclaimed motive. But while adhering to that basic principle, a more positive attitude might have helped to create an environment conducive to a better performance of their own organizations. Instead they are now confronted with the far from welcome development of yet another organization sharing the limited market on the island.

With a view to the declining economy and therefore increasingly tight budgets for advertising, there is little hope for quality improvement by the media themselves. But worst of all it's the public which will pay the price. ■

Appoint a Minister of Trade & Commerce!

A personal opinion by Louis N. Peters, secretary of St. Maarten Chamber of Commerce.

Reviewing the various news media in the Netherlands Antilles and evaluating the many issues and challenges the nation faces, we can only conclude that economic and business issues are being dealt with an on-hoc basis without any overall symmetry or system to handle the massive unemployment predicament on the horizon. The gravity of this predicament requires us, as a nation, to sit down and develop a co-ordinated set of policies to lead the economy out of the present slump into a more favourable situation for the rest of the decade and beyond.

As a developing country with a high per capita income and declining economic activities, the Netherlands Antilles needs a Minister of Trade & Commerce to effectively handle the many economic and business changes this country is presently undergoing. That is, if it is to survive. Its extensive industrial and commercial infrastructure demands such an appointment to support its affairs in a more practical and business-oriented manner.

This plea for a Minister of Trade & Commerce should not in any way be construed as a reflection on the ability of the Ministers of Economic Affairs and Finance. Such an addition to the Cabinet is more than justified by the country's present economic situation. A special ministry under this title will allow those in charge to give undivided care and attention to those infrastructures and institutions needed if we are to solve our pressing unemployment problems.

Our main industrial and commercial infrastructures are well known. They include large oil refineries, deep-water harbours, oil transshipment terminals, free zones, industrials parks, commercial airline companies, freeport facilities and a large com-

mercial dry-dock. Each demanding unique skills and knowledge of the trade. Each with its own employment potential and demands.

The fact, however, that most of these activities show poor results, forces us to assume that something is basically amiss.

The question must be raised whether these institutions have not become wholly ineffective and unacceptable as development agencies for the country. They have to be either replaced or upgraded with new sets of objectives. That would require the formulation of new perspectives involving a great deal of preliminary research.

The establishment of the proposed ministry seems of vital importance.

From a business point of view it makes little sense for our islands to participate in Round Table Conferences, when there is no perception

nor preliminary understanding of the economic structures needed to sustain the present levels of trading integrity, economic equality, and commercial equity. Beyond the



clamour of these important political conferences, precious little has been done to define the structures of each island's respective commercial and trading relation, nor have changes in ▶

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the existing structures been anticipated. To mention just one example: there are presently quite a few manufacturers in Curaçao anxious to market their products throughout the Caribbean, but they run up against a transport problem caused by the high rates and unreliability of the Curaçao Harbour services.

Defining structures, problems and bottlenecks is a must to secure our economic future. For that reason I suggest the appointment of a Minister of Trade & Commerce.

Profile

The key prerequisite for the appointment of a Minister of Trade & Commerce should be a profound knowledge of the world of business and trade, rather than a particular kind of specialization.

His priorities should lie with:

1. the economic and political conditions and prospects which affect the commercial and industrial welfare, survival and growth.
2. the improvement of trade investment promotions, competition, pricing, transportation and other factors affecting trade and commerce in each island territory.
3. the development of new sources of local and foreign investment, tourist trade, industry, trading and financing.
4. perceived threats, in particular from governments, to independence of action. A mutual understanding should be arrived at in the Cabinet about the new ministry's policies and objectives aimed at generating job and investment opportunities.
5. protecting his ministry against

pressures from other Cabinet members, Ministries and interest groups which might jeopardize the overall purpose of his service.

6. the quality of his staff, which should work in close co-operation with the private sector and operate as efficiently as possible.

7. maintaining both formal contacts with the business communities in order to keep his fingers on the pulse of the country.

The main concept behind the proposal of a Ministry of Trade & Commerce is to create an effective tool for linking today's challenges of Industry and Commerce with the changing circumstances in the country and for the development of new strategies furthering economic growth. ■

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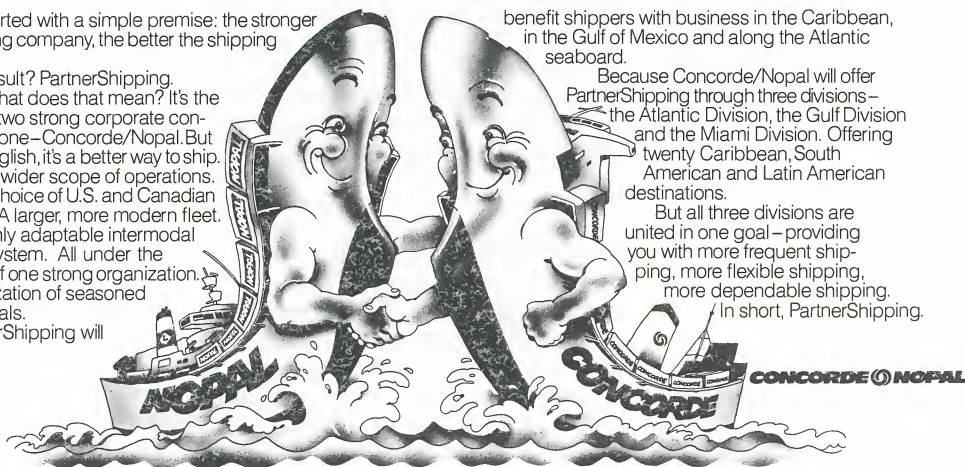
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U.S. Consul General Alta Fowler leaves

INTERVIEW

As the Consul General of the United States in Curaçao since 1979, Alta Fowler has seen relations between her country and the Netherlands Antilles grow in importance because of strategic and economical developments in the area and the islands' preparation for independence. After four-and-a-half years of involvement and interest as no other U.S. Consul here had demonstrated. Miss Fowler is retiring from the U.S. Foreign Service altogether to enjoy her pension in Lexington, Virginia. She explained why she considered the Netherlands Antilles the highpoint of her career.

Not America

"I never really felt like an outsider here, and the people are not anti-american. We sit here on this hill (overlooking Willemstad-ed) but nobody is throwing rocks at us or demonstrating outside. They have genuine customs here and they wish to remain neutral and to be respected as such. They have been open and honest with me, answering my questions on all levels and respecting my position," she said.

Sometimes Ms. Fowler feels a little disappointed over what has been achieved on the islands during her stay. "I have to keep telling myself, this is not America. You have other ways of doing things. Take for instance your party system, it is as democratic as I've seen. All those parties may make it difficult to govern effectively, but the people are represented in government. The voter-percentage (70 percent country wise-ed) is not distressing, but people should be encouraged to vote and use the ballot instead of the bullet as has happened in some Latin American countries," she said.

Trade-Unions

Miss Fowler also said that although it is difficult to face the hard times the nation is in because there is no money for sufficient social welfare pay, the attitude of the unions is discouraging. "We are in a tough situation and we can't pay the unemployed 80 percent of

their last earned pay as they do in Holland. Still the union's attitude of not accepting cuts in wages, working hours or personnel is no help at all, because in the end they will drive industries into bankruptcy and take government and other business with them," she said. "On the other hand the family ties are much stronger here, which is nice, but it does mean that often more people live on fewer salaries and it's harder for them to live on less. Still the unions should inform their members of what it could mean if they don't accept any cuts. Look at Chrysler Corporation," she said.

"A few years ago the workers at



no outsider

Chrysler had to accept severe paycuts in order to save the government-backed company. A few days ago Chrysler announced it is now making money and will start repaying the workers what they contributed," she said.

U.S. interest

The U.S. Consul has also seen the six islands and especially Curaçao and Aruba grow apart, and though she regrets it she feels it was in fact built in the Statute from the beginning. "These islands did not really have a chance of succeeding as a nation from the beginning, because there were no national political parties and thus no real national consensus. When I came there was still hope and a will on the

part of the central government to keep the islands together, but when MEP (the majority party in Aruba-ed) walked out of the central government the breakup was a fact," she said. "From the point of view of the United States the most important thing is that all the islands remain democratic. We are favorably inclined toward your system and have never had any problems with clearance for our ships or anything else," she said.

Ms. Fowler said the United States is finally taking a growing interest in this area because of developments in its surroundings.

"For years the U.S. Foreign Service and State Department have been telling the administrations to look to the South. It took what happened in Surinam and Grenada to wake them and make them realize how important it is to maintain our friends and allies in this area," she said. "These islands are of enormous strategic value because of their position in relation to the Panama Canal and the Venezuelan oilfields, and because of their harbour facilities on main shiproutes, she said. "So we have started visiting the islands more to reassure them by our presence that we value their friendship. Of course their defence is in the hands of the Dutch and I have every trust in their ability to do it, she said.

C.B.I.

"The Caribbean Basin Initiative, meant to aid our friends in this area with their economies, is a step in the right direction, but too much of it got caught up in Congress," she said. "Of course other interests such as those of the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico had a lot to do with excluding many Caribbean products from the reductions in import-duties and other restrictions, which makes the Initiative far less effective than it could have been. More important, however," she said, "is that it has opened the eyes of Congress to the need of the people here to feel that the United States is prepared to support their democracies, which is also in their interest." ▶

after 4½ yrs. of highly appreciated involvement

by Paul de Windt

Asked about the development of the tax-treaty negotiations between the United States and the Netherlands Antilles affecting the off-shore industries here Ms. Fowler sighs. "There is not much I can tell you because Congress has kept a tight lid on this matter, but from what little I hear I can say that the islands have done a good job of retrieving the most out of the situation," she said. "I only wish they would speed up the making of the treaty so it can be signed because I realize that the off-shore sector provides more than a third of your Government's income."

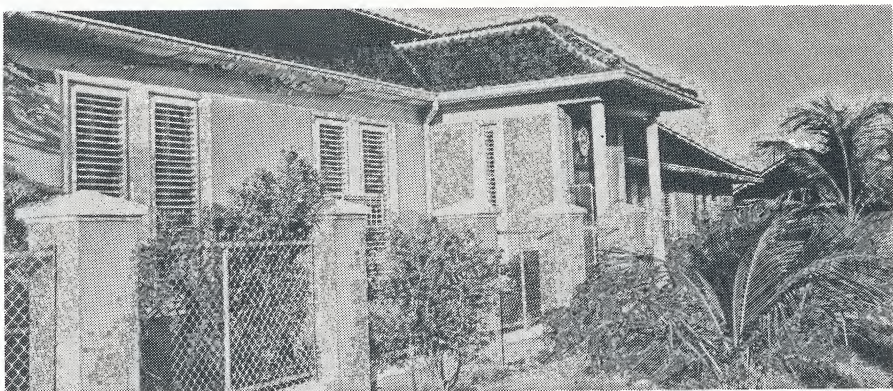
"Apart from the needs of the islands another important thing that is aiding your government is that these off-shore companies borrow money on the American money market, which is good for the U.S. economy," she continued. "If those companies would close down, the American companies that earn money by providing these loans would lose millions," she said, "and this is aiding the situation."

"It is not that I am impatient, she said, "but sometimes I think government could work faster. We have had a civil aviation agreement between the United States and these islands for years, but it still has to be ratified. Another problem is that often agreements and such have to be ratified by Holland, and in the case of multilateral agreements such as, on the judicial side, the exchange of prisoners, even by the Common Market," she said. "These things take time, and that is something we cannot waste in today's world."

Narcotics

Still, the Consul General insisted that she has had full cooperation from government here in judicial matters such as the flow of narcotics here today worries me because I've always said that a transit country will eventually become a user country and thus a victim, she said. "Look at how Holland started merely as a port for narcotics going to Europe. We pleaded with the Dutch government to stop this, but it did not help.

Look at Amsterdam today and you'll know what I'm talking about."



House on the hill

"Here in the islands it started with small planes getting fuel for their planes to go to South America and pick up the drugs on their way to the United States. Some of these planes used waterbeds for spare tanks, can you believe that? I would not fly in a plane like that," she said with her hand on her chest. "But the airport officials here did a good job of finding legal ways, meaning by F.A. regulations, to delay or stop them. The result is that the planes are not coming here as much and most of the drugs go to the States in boats. But drugs spread quickly and IU hear there is already heroine on the islands," she said.

The fact that lately guns have been coming into the islands more than ever worries Ms. Fowler, but she realizes that government officials are doing all they can. "The problem is that you have no effective coast guard. We could provide better equipped vessels, but the problems of maintenance would be costly. What I don't like are all those people driving those powerful boats around without a licence, it is irresponsible. I think government should tax these boats according to their horsepowers and use the money to build up the coastguard so they can demand and enforce rules on the waters and licenses," she said. "We will be happy to provide trainers in boat safety to instruct volunteer teachers here to do this."

Own boss

As for foreign policy Ms. Fowler

thinks that although that is officially Holland's task, the government here has done a good job of helping itself. "You have permission to negotiate with Venezuela, Colombia and the United States yourselves, and the acting minister at the Dutch Embassy in the United States, Harold Henriquez, has been a chief negotiator in the tax-treaty talks. Of course treaties have to be ratified by Holland," she said, "but in practice your government is conducting its own foreign policy. I notice it in my job, because officially we fall under the U.S. Embassy in Holland, but in practice I report directly to the State Department in Washington," she said. "That's one of the reasons I say I'm going out on top. I have been pretty much my own boss here and felt free to take initiative. I have tried to work at grass-roots level by providing social workers and such with training," she said.

I think an American base here will not be necessary and it might evoke anti-American feelings, even if all governments concerned agreed to one. It would give people who are unhappy something to throw rocks at, and giving a oyster something to chew on in this case might not mean a pearl will come out," she said.

"For now I'll be happy knowing the United States has taken a renewed interest in your islands, which they have proven they deserve for being a trusted ally for 200 years," she said, "and I hope I have aided in getting them interested,"

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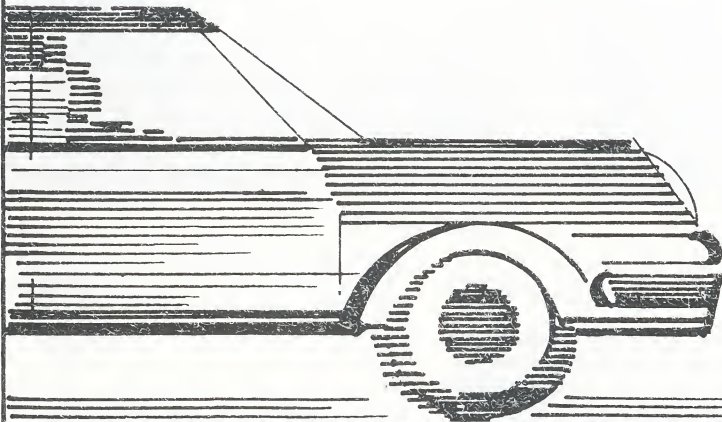
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SHELL NEDERLANDSE ANTILLEN VERKOOPMAATSCHAPPIJ N.V.



by H. C. Beers

Foreign exchange reserves rose in July due to transfers made by Lago to pay a profit tax of f 132 million. As a result the island government of Aruba was able to repay the loan from the Central Bank and furthermore to increase its time deposits. For monetary reasons the Central Bank outbid the private banks. The federal government faced serious financial problems and decided to increase its borrowings from the Central Bank. Besides, government bonds and treasury paper were issued. Shell Curaçao paid only the required minimum amount of profit tax. The refinery reported a break-even result for the second quarter, which is an improvement compared with the first quarter loss of f 43 million. The Curaçao Drydock Company continued to implement the necessary reorganization. The federal government bought the majority shares from R.S.V. and Nederex with the intention to transfer these shares to the island government of Curaçao. The National airline A.L.M. announced an urgency plan to safeguard the continuity of the company. Especially personnel expenses have to be reduced.

Foreign exchange reserves

During July the net official foreign exchange reserves with the Central Bank climbed substantially as a result of transfers made by LAGO Aruba from banking accounts abroad to the domestic banking system in order to pay profit tax to an amount of f 132 million. The Central Bank's condensed balance sheet as per 15th July showed net foreign claims of f 371 million, which is an improvement of only f 89 million compared with the end of June and f 37 million since the end of last year.

In the corresponding month of 1982, when LAGO had to pay f 156 million profit tax, the improvement amounted to f 172 million in July and f 122 million during the period January-July. These amounts also included a transfer of about f 30 million by Shell Curaçao to pay the required annual minimum amount of profit tax. Abovementioned Mid July 1983 figures probably do not include any Shell transfer.

Despite the inflow yet to be received the level of foreign reserves will probably not exceed last year's record high amount of f 434 million recorded at 31 July which included f 68 million held by the private deposit banks. Mid July 1983 these banks held only f 39 million worth of net foreign assets. This development means that the balance of payment on an annual basis does not show any surplus. At the end of June 1983 the balance of payments surplus amounted to about f 60 million for the past 12 months.

Bolivar devaluation

The Bolivar continued to fall in value

against the US dollar and the N.A. guilder. No official rate was published by the Central Bank of the Netherlands Antilles, but some banks quoted at the end of July a buying rate of f 14.95 per Bs. 100 which corresponds to Bs. 11.1 per U.S. dollar.

Before the devaluation the rate amounted to 4,3 per U.S. dollar, resulting in a decrease in its value of 158%.

Meanwhile the Central Government of the Netherlands Antilles changed its attitude somewhat on the embargo on the import of articles to protect the local industry against dumping of Venezuelan merchandise. This embargo was issued on 13 May. However, it appeared that the measure was not necessary for a number of articles. Especially the trade sector on Aruba raised its voice in protest. On 29 June the government withdrew 9 categories from the embargo list, including bread, cigarettes and furniture.

Furthermore, it appeared that the measure of embargo was taken as a temporary action, and that exemption could be granted from import prohibition to control the local volume of merchandise. Imports from Venezuela were allowed, provided imports of same articles from elsewhere decreased.

Inflation

During 1982 inflation on the islands Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao amounted to only 4.7 percent which is considerable less than the 1981 outcome of 8.6 percent. In October 1982 the calculation of the consumer price index was based on a new basket of spending components. Consequently, October will serve as the

new basis of 100 percent. The major changes in the spending components resulted in a higher share for the costs of transportation and communication against less spending for food.

The main components of inflation during 1982 appeared to be expenses for food, furniture, transportation and clothing. The total index rose from 100 in October to 100.1 in November and fell back to 100 in December. In January inflation rose by 0.2 percent owing to higher expenses of clothing, housing and healthcare. In February the total price index kept unchanged; healthcare continued to be more expensive, but the costs of housing decreased. In March inflation resumed its growth by 0.3 percent, due to higher expenses for healthcare and clothing. In April the index rose by only 0.1 percent owing to higher costs of drinks, smoking and transportation.

The main causes of this low inflation rate were lower energy prices and, as a result of a strong U.S. \$, lower exchange rates for European Currencies.

At the end of July the Dutch guilder was sold at f 0.61.

Public Finance

In this time of the year the federal budget for 1984 has to be presented to Parliament. However, even the 1983 figures have not yet reached this legislative body. This is a great pity because of the need for some information in view of the bad financial position of the federal government. During the first week of July the Central Bank stated on its condensed balance sheet that the government had decided to increase temporarily the limit on Central Bank lending to the government by f 12 million.

Since January 1981 the limit amounted to f 90 million and referred to advances to overcome temporary shortages of cash by the country. These advances are free of interest.

It is remarkable that as stated the decision to increase the limit was taken by the government. According to the notes to the articles of association of the Central Bank this authority has been reserved to the management.

However, the government was badly in need of more money to meet its financial liabilities. Not only had it to pay a tremendous amount of salaries, but also treasury paper was coming due. By Mid July the cash advances by the Central Bank amounted f 96 million. The government also announced the issue of new treasury paper due August 1984 ▶

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and 1985 and yielding 8.5 and 9.5 percent interest respectively. Furthermore, bonds will be issued maturing in 1988 and paying an interest of 10.5 percent. No maximum amounts have been set; the government will accept any amount.

Monetary developments

The island governments were able to improve their financial position. In particular Aruba which received f 132 million profit tax from the Lago refinery. Curaçao will only receive the minimum amount of f 28 from Shell. The island government of Aruba repaid the loan of f 25 million granted by the Central Bank; the remaining amount was placed on time deposit with the Central Bank. Mid July the island governments maintained deposits to a total amount of f 154 million with the Central Bank.

Last year Aruba received f 156 million as profit tax from Lago, of which about f 130 was spent within one year. However, Aruba still has to pay the share of 25 percent or f 39 million to the federal government.

The island governments' time deposits with the Central Bank are part of the monetary policy. The price is paid as an interest percentage. In July the Central Bank offered less than last year, but still outbid the private banks, which already enjoy a fairly good liquid position. Mid July the private banks maintained total balances with the Central Bank to an amount of f 91 million.

Interest rates

The department of economic affairs continued to advertise in the local newspapers the interest rates as quoted by the private banks on Aruba and Curaçao. The monthly surveys are published within the framework of the comparison of domestic prices of merchandise and services. The department of economic affairs started this comparison of interest rates per bank, as the private banks do not publish these rates themselves. It is a remarkable development, but the surveys certainly provide long needed information.

At end June all banks but one on Curaçao quoted 5¾% for time deposits for a period of 12 months and to an amount of f 10,000. This rate was also quoted during the last few months. The remaining bank offered 7¼%. On Aruba the banks offered slightly higher rates in the past. At end June the majority also quoted 5¾%, one bank offered 6 percent, whereas the remaining bank

table 1. Condensed balance sheet Central Bank; f million.

	15 July 1983	30 June 1983	31 May 1983
assets			
gold stock	41.4	41.4	41.4
foreign reserves	374.3	285.7	268.2
loans to:			
– fed. government	96.0	89.7	89.7
– island government	—	15.0	10.0
– others	1.0	1.0	1.0
sundry assets	5.6	5.5	5.4
TOTAL	518.3	438.3	415.7
liabilities			
banknotes	152.6	184.6	175.3
deposits held by:			
– tax collector	2.7	4.5	3.5
– island governments	154.2	51.8	62.9
– banks	91.0	68.0	62.5
– development projects	20.3	27.5	7.8
– other residents	16.7	19.6	16.7
– non-residents	3.1	3.9	5.3
money in custody	2.1	2.1	2.1
sundry liabilities	11.8	12.5	15.8

did not accept deposits of less than f 50,000.

Mortgage loans quoted in general 12 percent on Curaçao and 13 percent on Aruba, which is relatively high, especially bearing in mind that mortgage loans are only granted for ¾ of the estimated value and have to be redeemed within 15 to 20 years.

The government bonds issued during the years 1979/82 yielded 10.65 percent, while treasury paper maturing after three months showed an interest of 7.9 percent. Twelve months paper recorded a return of 8.7 percent. Treasury paper is only issued by the Department of Finance in behalf of the government.

Labour

Recently the Bureau of Statistics published the results of the 1981 census. The number of unemployed persons increased substantially since the previous census of 1972 from 10,949 or 15 percent to 15,642 or 16 percent. Curaçao accounted for the major part of this growth. In fact Curaçao was the only island where an increase in unemployment had been recorded and because of its share in the total population, the Netherlands Antilles figures reflect the

Curaçao development.

Unemployment among young people appeared to be tremendously high; 32 percent on all the islands and 40 percent on Curaçao. Besides more women than men were recorded as unemployed: 23 percent against 12 percent.

Of course, the number of employed persons also climbed considerably, but unfortunately not enough to alleviate the labour situation. According to the Bureau the participation percentage (labour force as a percentage of total population) increased from 34 to almost 42. This is fairly high compared with the other countries in the Caribbean. Trinidad recorded a percentage of 39, Venezuela of 32, Costa Rica of 35, but Barbados stated 46 and Puerto Rico 43.

Shell Curaçao

The Shell refinery reported a break-even result for the second quarter. This is a substantial improvement compared with the first quarter when a loss of f 43 million was recorded. However, the management added that the improvement might not be sufficient to change the annual outcome into a satisfactory profit. The operational expenses have to be reduced, in particular personnel expenses. ▶

The margin between purchases and sales amounted in the first quarter to f 64 million and to f 111 million in the second quarter. The expenses in these periods amounted to f 107 million and f 111 million respectively and included depreciation, interest, taxes, etc.

The management was satisfied that operational losses were no longer recorded, but to assure the continuity of the refinery the expenses have to be reduced by 20 per cent for a long period. There is no money available for new investments. The expenses consist for 50 percent of wages and salaries, whereas an additional 15 percent is related to personnel. When reducing these expenses by 20 percent an amount of about f 60 million will become available.

The management has held consultations with the trade union on a new collective labour agreement, which should be in effect on 1 October. No agreement was reached up till now. The trade union is against any reduction of personnel expenses.

ALM

The new management of the national airline ALM announced an urgency plan

in order to survive. The plan was presented to the various trade unions and staff. Consultations and negotiations started immediately. The reorganization should start effective 1 September and comprises an increase of income as well as a reduction of expenses. No lay-offs were mentioned.

Last year the airline recorded a loss of f 11 million and for the current year a loss of f 16 million is expected. Besides there are additional liquidity problems in transferring proceeds from some foreign countries.

The plan is aimed at improving the liquidity position and reducing the expected loss to f 10 million. Next year should show a break-even result.

To improve income the airline intends to increase freight transport which had fallen during the last year by more than 30 per cent, to re-open the Paramaribo route and to fly more charters during off-season months. The management does not intend to increase the existing tariffs.

The main part of expenses is related to personnel. The management wants to reduce these costs by 25 per cent. All personnel has to accept a reduction of salaries. However, at the moment some

of the trade unions concerned seem reluctant to co-operate.

Mining Company Curaçao

The mining company reported an operational profit of f 2.3 million for 1982 against f 1.1 million during 1981. Furthermore, some assets were revalued resulting in a capital gain of f 6.8 million, thereby increasing the total result for 1982 to the record high of f 9.1 million.

The favourable development was caused by a growth of the turnover of all products as well as an improvement of the efficiency. In particular higher sales of the basis product lime stone added to this result.

Total sales grew from f 12 million in 1981 to f 16 million in 1982, whereas expenses excluding provisions, interest and taxes, climbed from f 11 million to f 13 million.

In view of a reduction of construction activities on Curaçao the company views the future less favourably. However, it expressed a reasonable confidence that the total result for 1983 will not deviate substantially from the recorded amount. ■

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It's do or die for ALM

By Paul Comenencia



Manager Mannens

Almost frantic efforts are being made, for weeks already, to save (Antillean Airlines) ALM, the Netherlands Antilles' national carrier, from virtual bankruptcy. On July 25th, company president Jan Mannens and his brand new management team officially presented a so-called emergency plan to their staff and to the public in general. Their message was clear: "Either we accept a 25 percent cut in our salaries or we all witness the closing down of ALM."

The emergency plan, which almost immediately encountered the usual union opposition, calls for drastic measures to eliminate the cash shortage and to reduce ALM's estimated loss for 1983/84 from NAfls. 16.3 million to NAfls. 10.0 million, which is just under the projected loss of 11 million for 1982/83. On a longer term, the plan is geared to initiate the economic recovery of the airline.

The following table gives a summary of ALM's negative results since 1978:

(In millions of NAfls.)

1978/79	- 4.7
1979/80	- 4.8
1980/81	- 5.2
1981/82	- 4.7
1982/83	- 11.0 (tentative)
1983/84	- 16.3 (tentative)

Several internal as well as exter-

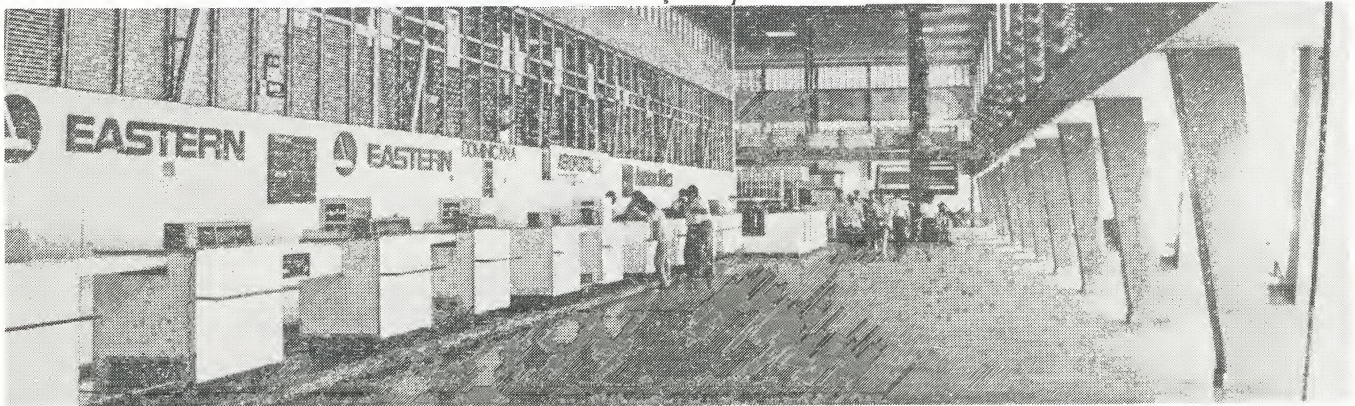
nal factors are cited as reasons for the enormous losses ALM has been suffering in the past half decade. Among the internal factors are, according to ALM's management: the lack of clearly defined objectives for ALM by its shareholders (the Netherlands Antilles 96% and Royal Dutch Airlines (KLM) 4%); the lack of effective coordination of the aviation and tourism interests of the insular and central governments; low productivity and high costs; the lack of an effective management information system enabling an active instead of reactive management policy and an insufficiently aggressive marketing strategy.

External factors are, apart from the high inflation rate (in 1979/80 fuel costs soared to 70 percent higher) and the economic recession:

President Carter's de-regulation policy which disrupted the aviation industry; an extreme protectionist attitude by countries in the region; the loss of the Surinam market; the collapse of the Venezuelan economy; heavy competition on the Miami and New York routes by American giants like American Airlines and Eastern, and a number of other internal factors such as difficulties in getting fare approvals, making it impossible for ALM to cover rising costs in time.

For obvious economic, social and political reasons, it is very important to secure ALM's existence in its present form, in order to safeguard the jobs of the company's 1100 employees and of course tourism and the flow of foreign currency. ▶

Curaçao airport



The steps that will be taken must render results within 12 months, while simultaneously they must also have long term effects. By the end of March next year, the shortage of cashflow is to be eliminated while the company should break even in financial year 1984/85.

There are a number of ways in which Antillean Airlines wants to increase its income. The first of them is to try to boost the volume of freight transport on existing routes. Due to a reduced demand for air freight transport, partly caused by sea transport competition and the fact that ALM did not pay enough attention to freight transport in the past years, the volume of freight transport has dropped by more than 30 percent, since 1978. Expectations are that by next month a freight organization now being prepared can be put into operation.

ALM and government officials are also doing their utmost to reopen the Surinam route which will certainly have a positive impact on the results of the present financial year. At the time of discontinuation of the Surinam route in 1981, revenues from this operation constituted 50 percent of ALM's total revenues.

Also ALM is aiming at increasing its production by striving for a NAfl. 2.2 million increase of charter income during the winter season.

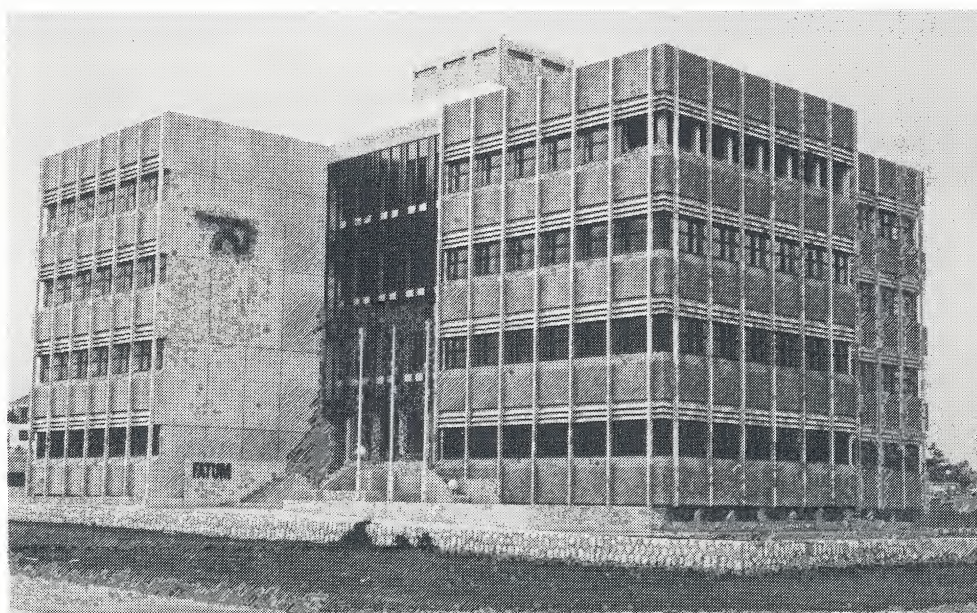
At the same time existing ALM markets will be stimulated and efforts made to increase the present market share.

As to the reduction of ALM's expenses, the most shocking part announced by the management was the decision to propose a cut of 25 percent in real wages, which are already frozen at the 1982 level. ALM's personnel costs consti-

tute 34 percent of the total budget, followed by fuel costs (19 percent), fixed fleet costs (18 percent) and departmental costs (17 percent).

Besides saving on labour costs, severe costs reductions of 10 percent and more have been ordered for all departments. On top of that, a serious fuel conservation program will be embarked upon.

The ALM management has announced separate and joint working sessions with the staff and all labour unions to implement the emergency plan. By doing so it hopes to turn back the disastrous course taken by ALM under the previous management. Doing this, however, will be a tough and lonely job, since the airline's largest shareholder has already warned that it does not have any money left to invest in its own property. ■



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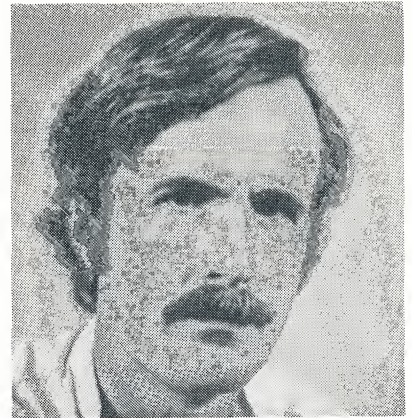
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NEDERLANDSE ANTILLEN

ANTILLEANIZATION



By J. M. Reijntjes

The trend is unmistakable. To mention a few examples may suffice.

Employees of government-owned construction firm Curaçao (Semako) object against the contracting of Dutch engineers. Likewise the Netherlands Antillean Police Union strongly protests the recruiting of personnel from Holland. A law student complains on the occasion of his graduation about the limited number of Antillean tutors at his alma mater, the University of the Neth. Antilles. (He also made an appeal to stem the influx of Dutch salesgirls, though no-one has ever heard of or witnessed such an invasion of females from the lowlands!) The dean of his faculty countered with a passionate plea for maintaining high levels of quality in the Antilles, while at the same time recognizing the importance of "antilleanization". Leaving aside the quality issue, the following concerns itself with that basic question: who is Antillean?

Singularly Dutch

Running into someone from Aruba, let's say in the USA, and inquiring after his or her nationality the answer most certainly will be 'Aruban'. Raising the same question with someone from Curaçao or Bonaire chances are fair the reply will be 'Antillean'. But actually all three are Dutch. A fact based on a Dutch law of 1882, which became applicable to the whole realm at the proclamation of the 'Statute of the Kingdom of the Netherlands' on December 29, 1954. This law may not be amended without a certain measure of co-operation of that part of the realm called 'the Netherlands Antilles'. It differentiates between "Dutch citizens" and "residents of the Netherlands". The latter concept applying (at the time of proclamation) to persons residing for more than 18 months in Holland, Indonesia or the Netherlands Antilles who presently live

in the Netherlands. The concept "residents of the Neth. Antilles" is, however, not mentioned. For that we have to turn to the so-called General provision of the Curaçao legislation, a Royal Decree of 1968, containing the curious stipulation "residents of the Neth. Antilles are all, who reside in Curaçao". They are semi-Antilleans – no more.

Advantages

An odd situation, really: the Antillean, who considers himself an Aruban, is a Dutchman – due to an act of legislation drawn up in Europe in the remote colonial past.

The question should be raised whether this does render him any advantages. He is permitted to enter Holland at all times as the Netherlands know entry restrictions only with regard to foreigners i.e. non Dutch. Many have in the past exercised that right. In 1981 an estimated 40,000 Antilleans (total population 240,000) were residing in Holland. But, it should be noted, this right is by no means indefinite. It will only last for as long as it suits Holland. Restrictive regulations are regularly being advocated both on rational grounds such as housing shortage, unemployment, integration problems and brain-draining the Antilles as well as on irrational motives i.e. downright discrimination.

The authorities are not deaf to these arguments. The following may be considered significant. The fourth protocol of the Treaty of Rome safeguarding human rights and fundamental freedom contains the provision that "no-one may be denied the right to enter the territory of the State of which he is a subject." But when Holland approved the protocol in 1982 it stipulated the following restriction: All Persons who belong to the Kingdom have without distinction the Dutch nationality. In view of this the option is kept open to differentiate by means of legal regula-

tion between Dutchmen belonging to Holland and Dutchmen belonging to the Netherlands Antilles". The implication being that the Dutch can close their frontiers for Antilleans by simply introducing new legislation. The latter can hardly object. For years they have been restricting the entry for all 'non-Antilleans'. But in the event that Holland would pass such legislation the situation would become even more odd: the Antillean, who considers himself an Aruban, is a Dutchman who is not automatically allowed to enter Holland. One may well ask how much of a Dutchman is he really?

It should be noted that Antilleans are not only free to take up residence in Holland, but also in all countries belonging to the European community. This right is not derived from his Dutch nationality, however, but from the fact that the Antilles because of its special relationship to Holland is an associated member of the EEC. Only in the event of independence will this privileged position be terminated.

Antilleanization

The magic word of the eighties! The older-ones assure us that the concept is not new at all. The Aruban party AVP already employed the slogan twenty years ago. But the same applies to 'status aparte'...

The economic situation is deteriorating. Many feel threatened. It are these people who are highly sensitive with regard to the idea of antilleanization. In a positive sense it may imply future employment. But negatively some who are employed wonder whether antilleanization constitutes a menace. In particular the white, born and raised Antilleans, feel threatened.

Unjustly so, one is assured, the concept only regards the (Dutch) expatriates holding on to the best jobs. But that category couldn't be bothered less.

His future lies in Holland. Things will last their time.

Is antilleanization more than an empty slogan? If so, the white Antilleans may well fall victim not the contracted expatriates.

Yet another question arises: who will occupy the positions thus made available? The 40,000 Antilleans who migrated to Holland, some of whom have been living there for more than 15 or 20 years? Are they still 'Antilleans'?

It may be clear that antilleanization and nationality are closely related. Nationality is described in juridical literature as 'membership in a nation' Antilleanization implies allotting positions presently held by expatriates to members of the nation. And obviously we should first of all think of decision-making positions rather than sales-girls.

Thus seen antilleanization is a most important concept. But in order to prevent abuse of the idea for other pur-

poses than the public interest or that the wrong people will be victimized and that – just as undesirable – the wrong ones will profit, it is imperative to determine first of all who are members of the Antillean nation. This cannot be done without creating a formal membership, an Antillean nationality.

National awareness

Another aspect should be mentioned. We speak about 'the Antillean people', there exists an Antillean flag and even an Antillean coat of arms, but there is no such thing as an Antillean nationality. Whatever position one takes with regard to the desirability of independence one thing is clear, the Antilles is searching for an own identity. There is an evident Antillean awareness, but as long as no mention is made of the Queen one does not encounter much feelings of Dutch awareness.

The universal declaration of human rights declares that 'every person is entitled to a nationality. Which raises the question whether the Antilles should not move ahead one step and demand

an own nationality?

Doesn't it seem a bit ridiculous that the law recognizes Antillean ships but not Antillean people? The accent should be put on the word 'recognize' for that people does exist and has done so for a long time. The only problem is how to distinguish it.

The Statuut is not to be blamed in this respect, nor does it constitute a hindrance. The phenomenon of several nationalities within one kingdom is quite feasible as is shown by the British Commonwealth. Moreover the advantages rendered by the Dutch nationality will remain in force for as long as the Statuut prevails, as was indicated earlier. Thus everything seems to be in favour of creating an Antillean nationality. Why then does it not come to pass? No doubt the Dutch are partly to blame. Conscious of the colonial past there is a hesitance to exercise influence. But first and foremost the cause lies with the Antilleans themselves. Should they leave it up to others to decide their place amongst the nations of the world? ■

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PEOPLE

SIXTEEN YEARS ago, in 1967, doctoral student **John Birmingham jr.** was considering two subjects to write his dissertation on. One of them was Papiamento, the native language of the Leeward islands Curaçao, Aruba and Bonaire.

Originally Birmingham was to write his dissertation on the famous "jarchas", Arabic poems written in medieval Spanish. He abandoned the subject because of a lack of information and turned to Papiamento, on which he found a brief article in a textbook about Spanish dialectology.

Somebody in Curaçao- probably the Tourist Board, he says- sent him some copies of *La Prensa*, a local newspaper. He read them to figure out the grammar and the vocabulary and, in the summer of 1968, came to Curaçao for a personal rendez vous with a language he knew almost everything of, expect for the way it was spoken.



Through well known politician Edsel "Papy" Jesurun, Birmingham met renowned Papiamento scholars like: Pierre Lauffer, May Henriquez and Antoine Maduro. From all of them he tried to get to know as much as he could about Papiamento.

Exactly fifteen years later, last June, Birmingham came back to Curaçao as a professor of Spanish, to talk at the fifth annual meeting of the Association of Caribbean Studies. His subject was, very suiting, "Papiamento Revisited".

Birmingham speaks Papiamento fluently and as his wife is Dutch also understands Dutch. He writes in Papiamento to friends in Curaçao. Talking to AR about his remarkable relationship with Papiamento, being an American, he boasts: "I probably have the largest collection of Papiamento literature in all of the United States."



Progressive and hard working Jacques Visser, general manager of Curaçao's radiostations Hoyer I and II, aims high. In order to improve the quality of his news staff he recently invited broadcasting expert **Robert Papper** to come to Curaçao, evaluate his station's performance and give all necessary advice.

For two full weeks in August, Papper conducted an exhaustive programme of listening to recordings of news broadcasts, reading news scripts and studying other aspects of the station's broadcasting. Although he had difficulty understanding Hoyer's broadcasting languages

Papiamento and Dutch, Papper managed to draw several conclusions which he put in a lengthy report which should be of great advantage to Visser and his staff. For 17 years Papper has worked in broadcasting in Minneapolis and in Maine in the U.S. For over one year now he has been in charge of the broadcasting department of the American University in Washington, D.C.

Says Papper: "I've always been very critical of working journalists. I guess the reason I decided to go into teaching was to try and promote better journalism myself". At Hoyer they are agreed Papper made the right decision.

Singer-comedian **Charles Saint Paul** and he **BIG APPLE BAND** from New York this July were in Curaçao for the sixth time. Saint Paul's act has almost become a part of the local scene. He is one of the few visiting artists who has been able to involve the public in his nightly shows at the Curaçao Plaza Hotel. His two female singers have also made a hit.

Apart from rocking the crowd with his comical impressions of Elvis Presley and Joe Cocker, Saint Paul showed he has not wasted his time on the island. He talks and sings in the native language, Papiamento, using topics of interest to the local people.

Says he: "I find the public in Curaçao very responsive and by following their recommendations and watching their reactions I've built a show they appreciate." Saint Paul came to Curaçao almost by accident in April 1978, when political problems in the Dominican Republic forced him to switch his tour destination to Curaçao.

He immediately felt at home here and has been back between touring performances as a tourist several times and has witnessed two carnival celebrations. "The people are genuine", he says, "and they



know what they like." He was so impressed by the carnival celebrations that when he cannot make it to Curaçao to watch parade he calls to find out which songs became the winners in the tumba festivals, held to choose the road-march, so he can use them in his act. Asked if he had never had any trouble with the people in the front rows he selects to make fun of during his shows, he answered: "I know how far I can go. I'm not going to make a pass at somebody's wife as I've seen others do. What I do is strictly have a little fun," he laughs, "bubble-gum fun."

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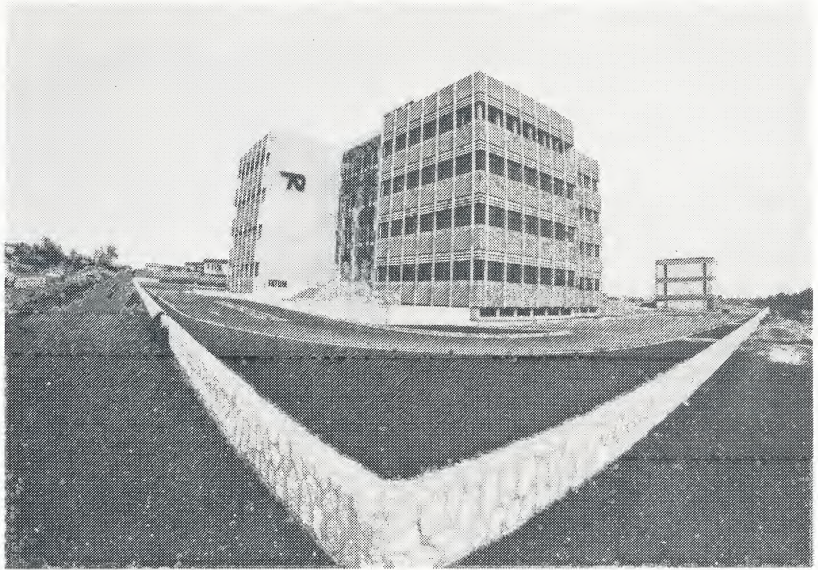
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Panam back in the Antilles



Only five years ago America's proud airline PANAM looked finished. Early this year the books began to show once again an encouraging picture. A few months la-



Arturo Jesurun

ter the company's 727's started touching down on St. Maarten. Soon afterwards Aruba was added to the long list of Panam's destinations. Says the carrier's representative in the Netherlands Anti-

Iles, Mr. Arturo Jesurun: 'bringing Panam back was quite a feat of arms' Undeniably he has a reason to be proud of the performance of the company he serves as well as of his own achievement convincing the airline's management to put Aruba on it's route map.

The story of Panam is well known. Opting for long distance flights it exchanged its Caribbean destinations for Australia in a deal with American Airlines years ago. Realizing its need for a larger domestic foothold it bought National Airlines five years ago after a real war of bidding with Eastern. Little did the management know at the time that Carter would soon declare deragulation. Having paid US\$ 500 million for National and experiencing difficulties with the trade-unions it could not cope with the fierce competition which resulted from Carter's measure. How serious Panam's situation had grown became evident when the company sold its famous sky-



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scraper in Manhattan. A drastic reorganization initiated by Panam's new and highly capable president Edward Acker jr. and the willingness of personnel to accept a 10% wage cut, set the company back on its feet.

In 1981 the carrier's president cruising the Caribbean happened to stop at Curacao. Mr. Jesurun, who had become the airline's representative in 1978, tried in vain to organize a meeting between the island's commissioner of tourism and Mr. Acker. The Curacao government apparently was not interested. The next destination of the cruise was Aruba. Always eager to explore any possibility which might serve the tourism industry on his island the Aruban commissioner Mr. Daniel Leo immediately arranged a reception in honour of Panam's president. As a result Mr. Jesurun was asked to supply the company with as much relevant information as possible with a view to the viability of Aruba as a new destination. When Mr. Jesurun had completed his research, he felt obliged to present his findings to the Curacao government as well. Again no interest was shown. Aruba on the other hand was quite eager to see Panam open up a route between itself and John F. Kennedy Airport in New York. Recently Panam's clippers began touching down on the Queen Beatrix airport of Aruba five times a week. ■



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NEW TASKS FOR CARIBBEAN LIBRARIES

Aruba conference sets agenda for the eighties

"It is fairly evident that libraries, which are the main repositories of information in the Caribbean have an essential role to play in development. It is a role that is generally not recognized in many quarters, and in some instances, not even acted upon by the libraries themselves. The result has been in many cases a tale of missed opportunity and unrealized potential". But as the author of the statement Dr. Dennis H. Irvine noted, the fact that librarians from all over the region were meeting in Aruba earlier this year to discuss exactly that role indicates that the tide is turning for the better. The resolutions of the conference (see insert) show at least a serious willingness on the part of Caribbean librarians to gear their organizations to the development task at hand.

Said Alice van Romondt, head of Aruba's Public Library, which hosted the conference: "the meeting was a great success in particular from a professional point of view and I do expect increased involvement in society as a result".

The philosophy for an approach which differs distinctly from what is generally accepted as the traditional task of libraries, was laid down by Dr. Irvine in the conference's keynote address. Having just attended the first meeting ever of Caribbean Ministers for Science and Technology, he passed on to the assembled librarians that group's agreement that priority emphasis should be placed on the science and technology information sector." If there is general agreement about one thing", he said, "it is that information is vital to the process of development". An insight very much shared by UNESCO, which states in its Medium Term Plan that "information has become an essential basis for the progress of civilization and society. Lack of information and of effective means of exchanging it are now widely recognized as limiting factors in the economic and social development of peoples. Thus the problem of in-

formation is none other than the problem of managing mankind's knowledge – the collective memory which society must learn to control effectively and utilize in order to progress". In this, Dr. Irvine pointed out, libraries have a pivotal role to play.

Such general insight, however, needs to be adapted to accommodate the particular. "The approach to the role of Caribbean libraries in development is likely to differ in significant ways from that of libraries in the United States or other highly developed countries." Dr. Irvine pointed out.

First of all the differences in scale of resources require a different strategy. Regional co-operation would seem to be an important component of such an approach. The limited financial resources dictate a well defined acquisition policy in view of the very distinct developmental needs of the respective societies.

Although a general assessment as provided by UNESCO's Medium Term Plan may be helpful to foster awareness, the actual drafting of policies has to be done on the local and regional levels. For that reason Dr. Irvine disciplined himself to a brief exploration of one specific aspect of the contribution libraries should give in developing nations, namely their role in research for progress and development.

Point of departure were some well known if not always accepted ideas about the role of the university in the developing world. Said



Alice v. Romondt

Dr. Irvine: "It has always been my conviction that universities in developing countries defend their autonomy best by exercising that autonomy in assuming responsibilities not always easily reconcilable with the traditional role of universities as commonly defined. Thus, universities in developing countries cannot be passive factors in the process of develop- ▶

ment, producing skilled human resources without concern as to why and to what end, and generating knowledge through research without worrying about the usefulness of that knowledge in the local as opposed to the universal context and the application of that knowledge to the problems at hand."

Consequently he defined as the major test to be applied to university research its relevance to the community, its contribution or potential contribution to identifying and solving local problems. Such research, Dr. Irvine maintained, must be policy oriented. "The university should anticipate public needs and policy as much as possible, since governments do not always have the information, knowledge or expertise upon which to plan or determine priorities". But in order to comply with this task a high degree of co-operation is required.

"Effective research for development requires a critical mass of human resources, institutional resources, information resources, and financial resources.

These resources are not in abundant supply in the Caribbean and critical masses can be achieved only by rationalisation of them at the national level, and often at the regional level as well". This point is increasingly starting to be appreciated in the Caribbean, according to Dr. Irvine, who added, however, that initiatives which do attempt to rationalize human, institutional and financial resources, often neglect to do the same with regard to the information resources needed to support the particular co-operative research endeavours.

Too often research programmes are being planned and put into execution without any reference to the capacities of the libraries to support such programmes or ▶

RESOLUTIONS

ACURIL 1983

1. WHEREAS it has been generally agreed that there is need for improvement in the two-way communication between the researcher and the librarian BE IT RESOLVED that ACURIL organise a series of continuing education programmes including research methodology and user education that will strengthen the research capabilities of librarians and assist them to appreciate better the research needs of different types of library users.
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that ACURIL promote the compilation and distribution of more bibliographic tools of particular interest and specific usefulness to the Caribbean and Latin American region.
2. WHEREAS access to information is essential for socio-economic scientific and technological development of Caribbean and Latin American countries, and WHEREAS the new technology can most effectively facilitate the transfer of needed information from developed to developing countries, and WHEREAS the current high cost of telecommunications very often prohibits this transfer of information BE IT RESOLVED that institutional members of ACURIL make representation to their governments to have them obtain special educational discount rates from their local telecommunications agencies to facilitate the free flow of information.
3. WHEREAS there is growing need to utilize computer technology to increase and improve research capabilities, and WHEREAS it is generally recognised that computer software packages available from developed countries are not always compatible with Caribbean needs.
BE IT RESOLVED that Caribbean libraries endeavour to develop pertinent software packages with technical assistance if necessary from appropriate organizations.
4. WHEREAS it is recognized that librarians need to keep abreast of new developments in the field of library and information sciences and WHEREAS it is desirable for librarians to be able to apply appropriate aspects of the new developments BE IT RESOLVED that ACURIL establish continuing education programmes through workshops, seminars and conferences that will provide its members with these new experiences.
5. WHEREAS it has been noted that there are substantial collections of visual materials in the several countries of the Caribbean, and WHEREAS it is desirable that copies of such material be made available in other countries, and WHEREAS the reproduction of such material is costly
BE IT RESOLVED that ACURIL seek funding to begin reproduction of important sections of such collections.
6. WHEREAS it has been noted that the current bibliographical output of Caribbean agencies are not altogether comprehensive BE IT RESOLVED that ACURIL approach the CARICOM Secretariat to convene a meeting of interested parties for the purpose of developing mechanisms for improving the present situation.
7. WHEREAS the Caribbean library and information community is experiencing difficulties in keeping abreast of related research activities in the English speaking Caribbean BE IT RESOLVED that the Department of Library studies, UWI be approached to serve as a regional referral centre for the dissemination of this information at regular intervals.
8. WHEREAS it is known that valuable source material related to the Caribbean, located in metropolitan countries, remain largely inaccessible to Caribbean researchers
BE IT RESOLVED that every effort be made to locate relevant material in private hands and in institutions, and to repatriate this information so as to complement the inadequate resources available in the region.
9. WHEREAS ACURIL is committed to the preservation of historical material and the cultural heritage of the Caribbean, and WHEREAS these valuable material are in danger of being permanently lost through deterioration, and WHEREAS ACURIL's microform Committee having conducted a survey and recognises the problem, and WHEREAS the Virgin Island BLMAS is willing to assist with the preservation of these collections by microfilming, and WHEREAS the resources programme of U.S. National Endowment for the Humanities has funds available to support such a project
BE IT RESOLVED that ACURIL support the Virgin Islands Bureau of Libraries effort to submit a funding proposal to the U.S. NEH for continuous microfilming of these historical records and for expanding research data presently accessible to scholars and researchers.
10. WHEREAS uncertainty exists concerning the status of newly independent countries under the international copyright conventions, and
WHEREAS it is eminently desirable that newly independent countries and the creative members benefit under these conventions
BE IT RESOLVED that members of ACURIL urge their individual governments to take the necessary steps to accede to those conventions and to enact appropriate legislation to give effect to them

without any dialogue to determine how the necessary support might be accomplished. On the other hand it seems equally true to say, according to Irvine, that libraries often do not make enough effort to ascertain what kinds of research are being contemplated and what implications these initiatives might have for their own development plans.

"This role of the library in research" said Dr. Irvine "is not significant when the library is sufficiently well endowed that unselective acquisition of information material can be practised without detriment to any given research effort. It is, however, highly significant where resources are limited and a deliberate and conscious effort has to be made on acquisition priorities".

This neglect of rationalizing the information resources is one of the main reasons why the universities' impact on development in the Caribbean is not more significant. There is a gap between research and action, according to Irvine, a lack of real links between the generators and users of knowledge. "The knowledge that exists is not applied, because the knowledge is not known by those who are to generate the knowledge. Thus the problem in a nutshell is the problem of information, and in the Caribbean context it is therefore a problem that largely concerns libraries".

What it comes down to simply is the question "What is important to acquire?"

Once more Dr. Irvine pointed out that this question would be obviously irrelevant if libraries could acquire everything, but since in our poor countries in the Caribbean we cannot even remotely approach this absolute ideal, libraries have to have an acquisitions policy which determines the material that they must physically

store and that which they do not acquire but to which they must have access. Furthermore, in the context of research for development, the policy on acquisitions has to be guided by what material is important to what end. A policy principle which implies that libraries in the Caribbean need to go beyond the traditional service offered, and provide an information service that takes cognizance of and is oriented towards the information needs of research directed development.

Dr. Irvine suggested that "libraries in the Caribbean need to establish Documentation and Information Centres with their own data base and having access to various separate data bases that are particularly relevant.

Ideally such centres should be National Centres outside the library, with the latter being just one component, albeit a major one, of the national system. The important thing is that libraries, by virtue of their special expertise, should see it as their responsibility to promote the establishment of such Centres, and be the catalytic and moving agents for their realization.

These Centres should be the National Depositories for all information material produced and published in their respective countries."

The enormous increase in the production of printed material, is another factor, mentioned by Dr. Irvine, forcing Caribbean libraries to employ a policy of careful selectivity of material to be acquired. He has little doubt that the regional libraries will have to go the route of the industrialized countries employing modern computer services. But the costs involved will again mean that choices will have to be made concerning what information is to be

acquired and to which access is gained." It is therefore important that libraries should seek to obtain some guide as to the information needed by researchers, and in conjunction with them attempt to establish a priority rating for acquisitions based on the information considered most crucial to research for development".

With regard to the earlier mentioned gap between research and action, Dr. Irvine suggested that libraries in the Caribbean need to place greater emphasis on dissemination of research findings, particularly to end users. Even if they would not be able to provide "rapid and reliable answers to highly specialized questions by supplying selected, verified and evaluated information, they should at least be in a position to direct users to sources of information relevant to their particular concerns", Irvine said.

Moving in this direction will have far reaching implications for the staffing of libraries. Qualifications both in the field in which the librarian deals as well as in documentary techniques, including data processing and management, will as a result become more and more necessary.

Playing a more active role in promoting research for development requires libraries to be staffed by a different breed of librarians having both information and subject expertise.

This new role for libraries and consequently for librarians, as described by Dr. Irvine, was met with a large measure of agreement by the conference participants. Most of the adopted resolutions reflect the librarians eagerness to move in the direction indicated, which hopefully implies less tales of missed opportunities in the future and better use of the available potential. ■

The Joint Oil Facility

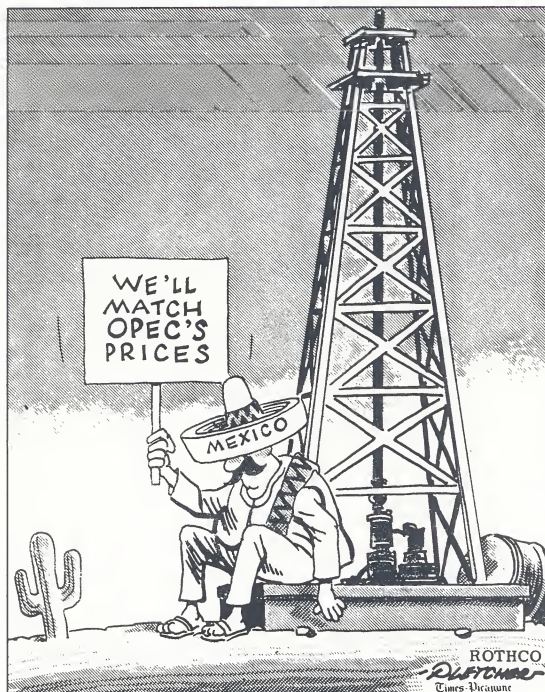
Mexican-Venezuelan Cooperation in the Caribbean

By George W. Grayson

The four-fold increase in oil prices achieved by OPEC in late 1973 sent economic shock waves through the countries of the Caribbean basin. Not only did energy and other imports become more expensive, but an increasingly sluggish demand in the United States and other industrialized states retarded the growth of export earnings.

Internationally, Caribbean area nations suffered gyrating changes in their terms of trade, balance of payments deficits, and growing foreign indebtedness to public and private financial institutions. Domestically, they experienced budget shortfalls, escalating prices, and rising unemployment.

Where could the hard-pressed countries of the region seek assistance? Not surprisingly, they included Venezuela on the list of nations from which aid was sought. After all, Christian Democratic President Rafael Caldera had, through his Trinidadian-born foreign minister, Aristides Calvani, inaugurated a new Caribbean policy rooted in geopolitical concerns. Specifically, the Venezuelan leaders wished to assure safe passage of their country's petroleum shipments, promote political stability in poor and backward island states, and develop markets for such exports as processed foods, petrochemicals, textiles, and light manufactures. In November 1971, Calvani convened a consultative meeting in Caracas of foreign ministers of Caribbean states; two subsequent sessions focused on regional transportation concerns; and in April 1973, Venezuela became the



first non-English-speaking member of the Caribbean Development Bank.

As a leading OPEC participant, Venezuela benefited handsomely from the surge of energy prices. Thus, the Democratic Action government of Carlos Andrés Pérez, which won elections in 1973, greeted the request from its neighbors for assistance by creating a cash-loan plan to offset the rise in oil costs incurred by Panama and the five Central American countries. Under this "First Program of Financial Cooperation" unveiled at Puerto Ordaz in December 1974, Venezuela agreed to allow beneficiary importers to keep in their central banks all monies above \$ 6.00 per barrel paid for oil, the international charge for which was then \$ 12.00. To finance balance of payments deficits, Venezuela would loan these retained

monies to the buyers for six years; however, if a participating nation proposed suitable development projects, cosponsored by an international financial institution, it could borrow the funds for up to 25 years, with a six-year grace period, at soft interest rates equal to those levied by the Inter-American Development Bank in its operations with ordinary capital resources, approximately 8½ percent. The Venezuelan Investment Fund (FIV), its income generated from taxes on oil and gas sales, was created to approve programs and projects under the Puerto Ordaz Accord. This agreement, later expanded to include Jamaica and the Dominican Republic, covered a volume of oil equivalent to 5/6ths of all imports in the base year (1972), then

a gradually decreasing percentage of purchases until expiring on 31 December, 1980.

Sixty-two percent of the \$ 678 million committed and wholly disbursed under the program by January 1982 had been converted into long-term loans for projects in the areas of energy, water, agriculture, transportation, and industry. The allocation of resources was as follows: Costa Rica, 12 percent; El Salvador, 15 percent; Guatemala, 19 percent; Nicaragua, 11 percent; Jamaica, eight percent; Dominican Republic, six percent; Honduras, 13 percent; and Panama, 16 percent.

Originally, the Pérez regime viewed the aid scheme as a transitional measure to enable countries, previously dependent on Venezuelan supplies, to adjust to higher energy charges. Yet, the doubling of oil prices in 1979

George W. Grayson is professor of government at the College of William and Mary and author of *The Politics of Mexican Oil* (Univ. of Pittsburgh Press, 1980).

because of the Iranian revolution and the subsequent Iraqi-Iranian war led Caracas to cast about for partners in a new venture that would benefit regional economies ravaged by the sharp increase in oil prices.

In a parallel move, Venezuela attempted to convince the entire OPEC group to establish an aid program for all poor nations. When the cartel members, which prefer to aid their ideological brethren, turned thumbs down on the proposal, Mexico emerged as the prime candidate for inclusion in a regional undertaking. Its production had climbed from 209,855 barrels per day (BPD) in 1974 to 536,926 BPD in 1979, while its announced proven reserves had shot up more than eightfold to 45.8 billion barrels in the same period.

At first, pleas from governments of the region to furnish discounts or special arrangements fell on deaf ears in Mexico. Patrimony Minister José Andrés Oteyza stated: "Although they are needy, priority in selling them our oil will be determined by the terms of international trade rather than by any other consideration".

At least three events prompted Mexico to reevaluate its "strictly business" stance. In September 1979, President José López Portillo launched his "Global Energy Plan" in a UN speech. Among other things, this proposal called for cooperation between producing and consuming nations, and the establishment of "a short-term system, to be put into effect immediately, for resolving the problems of developing countries that import petroleum." This system "would guarantee supply and the honoring of contracts, stop speculation, provide for compensation for price increases, and even ensure considerate treatment on the part of the exporting countries."

On 24 January 1980, the Mexican chief executive spent nine hours in Managua where he condemned the "satanic ambition of imperial interests" and suggested that the Sandinista revolution — like the Mexican and Cuban ones before it — offered a viable path for Latin American nations anxious to escape the problems besetting the hemisphere. He offered assistance to the country's fishing and communications industries and pledged that *Petróleos Mexicanos*

(*PEMEX*), the state oil monopoly, would supply 7,000 BPD of crude, one half on the nation's consumption and an amount termed "indispensable" for the regime's survival. Nicaragua has yet to pay Mexico a penny for these oil imports.

Two weeks later López Portillo welcomed to Mexico City Jamaican Prime Minister Michael Manley. The leaders discussed regional issues, stressed their support for ideological pluralism and self-determination, and announced increased economic cooperation. López Portillo agreed that Mexico would provide 10,000 of Jamaica's 27,000-BPD oil requirements in exchange for 420,000 tons of bauxite each year.

The Joint Facility

Costa Rican President Rodrigo Carazo Odio joined the Venezuelan government in urging Mexican involvement in an area assistance venture, Carazo's interest in such a program was sharpened when Shell of Curaçao, which had been supplying his country, cancelled its contract in 1979, forcing Costa Rica to purchase crude on the Rotterdam spot market. This lobbying bore fruit on 3 August 1980, when López Portillo and Luis Herrera Campins, a Christian Democrat who had succeeded Carlos Andrés Pérez, agreed to the "Economic Cooperation Program for Central American Countries," commonly known as the joint facility or the San José Accords, after the city in which the signing ceremony took place.

This plan represents the first collaborative aid effort between an OPEC and a non-OPEC country. Under its terms, Mexico and Venezuela each pledged to ship up to 80,000 BPD of oil on concessionary terms to nine nations of the area (those covered by the Puerto Ordaz plan plus Barbados). The exporters promised to grant the importers credits amounting to 30 percent of the commercial price of their purchases for a period of five years at an annual rate of four percent. Should the resources derived from these credits flow to "economic development projects of priority interest, notably those spurring domestic energy production, the loans could be extended to

20 years at a two percent interest, with a five year grace period. These credits were offered at a fraction of the commercial rate; for instance, the Eurodollar interest rate at that time hovered over 10½ percent.

The donors have different financing mechanisms. The purchasing country must pay Venezuela the full market price for the crude within 60 days of delivery. *Petróleos de Venezuela*, the national oil company, informs the Venezuelan Ministry of Energy and Mines when the transaction has been completed and the payment received. In turn, the ministry relays the information to the *FIV*, which calculates 30 percent of the value of the sale and transfers that amount to the Central Bank, payable to the recipient nation. The latter may either have the money transferred immediately to its central bank or draw on its account at the Venezuelan Central Bank at a later date. In practice, the *FIV* has made quarterly deposits based on estimated sales during the next quarter, with payments generally made in dollars.

Mexico follows a much simpler procedure. The beneficiary state merely pays 70 percent of the value of the shipment upon delivery or within 60 to 90 days, retaining the other 30 percent.

Mexico and Venezuela would equally supply the needs of recipients, although shipments of petroleum were to be made in accord with commercial contracts entered into bilaterally by Mexico and Venezuela and the individual purchasing nation. Moreover, an effort would be made to dispatch the oil in ships operated by the Multi-national Fleet of the Caribbean (*NAMUR*), which was conceived in 1975. The agreement gave rise to government-to-government transactions between Mexico and Venezuela, on the one hand, and the importing country, on the other. In theory, all states of the area, including Cuba, were eligible with donor approval to join the program, which could be renewed annually after an initial one-year-period. In practice, there was no love lost between the Caracas and Havana regimes, militating against membership for the latter.

Even after the agreement was approved, Venezuela tried to convince Trinidad and Tobago, through ▶

REGION

Oil Deliveries Under the San José Accords, 1980-1982*

1980-1981**

1981-1982***

Recipient	Oil Supplied by Mexico (BPD)	% Total	Oil Supplied by Venezuela (BPD)	% Total	Total Shipments	Oil Supplied by Mexico (BPD)	% Total	Oil Supplied by Venezuela (BPD)	% Total	Total Shipments
Barbados	0	0.0%	1,601	100.0%	1,601	0	0.0%	1,307	100.0%	1,307
Costa Rica	5,225	48.0	5,650	52.0	10,875	4,175	38.4	6,707	61.6	10,882
El Salvador	3,875	32.9	7,920	67.1	11,795	5,500	45.4	6,612	54.6	12,112
Guatemala	4,225	31.1	9,381	68.9	13,606	5,050	44.2	6,383	55.8	11,433
Haiti	875	100.0	0	0.0	875	0	0.0	0	0.0	0
Honduras	525	8.5	5,637	91.5	6,162	0	0.0	514	100.0	514
Jamaica	5,725	27.1	15,430	72.9	21,155	7,500	35.9	13,361	64.1	20,861
Nicaragua	5,575	44.7	6,898	55.3	12,473	7,850	57.5	5,793	42.5	13,643
Panama	5,275	35.5	9,601	64.5	14,876	11,975	48.5	12,693	51.5	24,668
Dominican Republic	6,625	23.2	21,912	76.8	28,537	12,100	46.6	13,892	53.4	25,992
Total	37,925	31.1%	84,030	68.9%	121,955	54,150	44.6%	67,262	55.4%	121,412

* Data supplied by the Venezuelan embassies in Washington, D.C. and Mexico City.

** The figures for Mexico cover the 12 months beginning October 1, 1980; the figures for Venezuela cover the period from August 3, 1980 to July 31, 1981.

*** The figures for Mexico cover the 12 months beginning October 1, 1981; the figures for Venezuela cover the period from August 3, 1981 to July 31, 1982.

the course of extensive talks, to become the facility's third supplier. Instead, the island oil producer announced formation of its own loan plan for the eleven members of the Caribbean Common Market. Between 1980 and 1982, Trinidad and Tobago pledged \$ 208 million to pay the incremental cost of oil, fertilizer, and asphalt. Economic considerations at home and political problems abroad limited allocations to approximately \$ 75 million.

Caracas and Mexico City have renewed the San José Accords in 1981 and 1982. The second renewal was especially impressive because of the Herculean economic problems, including huge foreign indebtedness, afflicting both countries whose foreign exchange earnings declined precipitously because of falling oil prices. In August 1982, the donors agreed to continue granting five year loans automatically. Meanwhile, they modified the criteria for the 20-year credits to emphasize priority development projects and those that promote regional economic integration. Despite the 50/50 supply provision, Mexico failed to match Venezuela's shipments during the first two years of the facility. Mexican exports averaged only 37,925 BPD, 47.4 percent of its 80,000 BPD target in the first year. The two suppliers did, however, share the load more equitably during the second year. Economic and political considerations in Venezuela have

enlarged Mexico's role in the facility since August 1982.

Mexico and Venezuela agreed to supply half of each recipient's imports. In fact, refinery conditions and propinquity have dictated the Venezuela become the exclusive supplier of Barbados, although in March 1983 the Barbadian energy minister reportedly explored the possibility of obtaining shipments from PEMEX. Mexico would probably be the sole exporter to Belize should this former British colony, which became the eleventh facility beneficiary in August 1982, request oil. Ships for NAMUR have yet to be acquired, possibly because of the unfavorable economic conditions affecting tanker owners in the early 1980s. Hence, the multinational enterprise exists only as a paper fleet.

Problems

The San José Accords have encountered a number of problems. To begin with, virtually all of the region's refineries were equipped to accommodate reconstituted Venezuelan crude (55 percent crude plus light oil, diesel oil, gas oil, kerosene, etc.) not the heavy, sulfurous Maya grade comprising the bulk of initial PEMEX shipments. Even when their refineries could handle Mexican oil, countries found that it produced excess heavy fuel oil, necessitating the importation of gasoline and diesel from elsewhere. Adjustments in utilization capabilities are expensive and time-consuming

and, until they could be accomplished, the Dominican Republic and other countries insisted the Venezuela either furnish all of their oil or, at least, pre-treat the Mexican crude so that it could be run efficiently through local refineries. This factor, combined with PEMEX's lack of experience with, and knowledge of, the recipients' oil markets heretofore served principally by Venezuela, accounts for Mexico's puny first year exports. Since then, Mexico has adjusted its crude mix to better meet the needs of importers. For the last two years, it has provided only the relatively light Isthmus variety (which is still heavier and more sulfurous than reconstituted oil) to Costa Rica, El Salvador, and Nicaragua. Additionally, most recipients have now made refinery modifications or blended Mexican and Venezuelan imports to permit processing.

Nevertheless, as late as 12 March 1982, the commission of Mexican and Venezuelan representatives which coordinates the facility received a commission of Mexican and Venezuelan representatives which coordinates the facility received a communication from Honduras declining Mexican oil. This move reflected a protracted dispute between the Honduran government and Texaco, which operates the country's single antiquated refinery which was shut down for a year beginning in September 1981. The US firm resisted Mexican crude on ▶

the grounds that its refinery, when operating at full capacity to satisfy domestic demand for light gas and diesel fuel, produced excessive fuel oil, which – under the terms of the Accords – could not be exported. Even though a compromise has apparently been reached – the refinery will operate below full capacity and Texaco will import 2,000 BPD of product from Trinidad – Honduras received no Mexican crude in either 1982 or the first quarter of 1983 (except for 5,497 BPD in February 1983).

A May 1983 US State Department report pointed out that beneficiaries have paid internationally posted prices under the facility. In some instances, these charges have exceeded spot market prices, even when the advantage of concessional financing is considered.

Financial distress has caused Mexico and Venezuela to discontinue conversations about the possible joint purchase, leasing, or construction of one or more refineries to process their crude for ultimate shipment to facility participants and other purchasers.

Expanding the scope of the program has also posed a challenge to exporting countries. Cuba, which depends on the Soviet Union to provide over 95 percent of its oil on cut-rate terms, has never sought to affiliate. The donors have rejected overtures for membership from the Bahamas, Grenada, Guyana, and Sheldon Rapaport, a Swiss entrepreneur, who wished to use a refinery in Antigua to supply that and adjacent ministates. A member since August 1982, Belize has not yet asked for assistance. And the experience with Haiti proved disastrous.

Haiti joined the facility in late 1980 and received *PEMEX* crude valued at \$ 11 million the following April. According to a *Washington Post* article published on 25 December 1981, US officials believe that two businessmen, one alleged to be President Jean-Claude Duvalier's father-in-law, diverted the cargo to Curaçao, where it was refined into No. 2 fuel oil. The shift of the seller's market to one favoring buyers foiled the middlemen's plan to turn a sizable profit on the ultimate sale of the shipment, which may have been destined for South Africa. The petroleum glut

meant that the fuel oil was worth only \$ 8.6 million at the time, which would still have produced a profit given the 30 percent price break anticipated by Haiti. Outraged at what one observer called "voodoo economics," Mexico billed the Port-au-Prince government for the full \$ 11 million. Both donors subsequently barred Haiti from further aid for failing to live up to its contractual obligations, which include devoting facility oil exclusively to domestic requirements.

More serious than membership questions have been the recipients' difficulty in designing projects that would qualify for long-term credits. An inability to devise appropriate projects meant that, as of mid-1982, Venezuela had granted only five of these loans compared to 70 under the Puerto Ordaz agreement: four to the Dominican Republic (\$ 12 million). Mexico has been even less forthcoming. Of course, the Puerto Ordaz program lasted six years whereas the joint facility began in mid-1980 and required months to begin functioning.

The above-mentioned State Department study indicates that three other factors have hampered the development and implementation of projects: lack of guidelines supplied by Mexico and Venezuela, limited institutional capability by the donors to review proposals for long-term financing, and an acute shortage of cash for expensive, energy-related activities.

Awarding loans has posed an increasingly difficult challenge to Mexico and Venezuela, both of which are tarved for dollars with which to conduct trade and meet payments on their foreign debt, which exceeds \$ 108 billion between them. Nineteen eighty-three is a presidential election year in Venezuela, and criticism of foreign aid at a time of domestic distress by business groups and the confederation of Venezuelan Workers, the nation's major labor organization, forced temporary suspension of Venezuelan credits under the facility in March. Consideration of project funding resumed after the annual meeting of the *FIV* IN April. Mexico vowed to continue extending concessionary loans, at least until the end of the third year of the Accords.

Attractive terms notwithstanding, several beneficiaries have not kept up

their payments for petroleum acquired from the suppliers. As mentioned above, Nicaragua has failed to pay for oil received from Mexico (Venezuela made its last shipment in July 1982 after the Managua regime halted payments in May 1982). This did not prevent the head of the Nicaraguan Energy Institute from asserting that the 1983 oil price decline would save his government \$ 6 million on Mexican imports alone. In mid-1982 Mexico refinanced an \$ 80 million oil debt that Costa Rica had contracted. Even so, Mexico assured the San José government that it would guarantee oil supplies to Costa Rica for the next three years, as well as continue financing oil explorations under a 20-year facility credit.

Prospects

Both Mexico and Venezuela have exaggerated the amount of aid bestowed under the joint facility. former President López Portillo was especially prone to hyperbole. In his sixth state of the nation address, he claimed that Mexico alone had made \$ 700 million available to beneficiaries between 1980 and 1982. In fact, the total credit outlay for both donors in this period was \$ 857 million, according to the *Financial Times*, a highly respected British publication.

Still, the San José Accords have proven a practical and generous source of assistance. For that reason, the Reagan administration was quick to pull the program under the tent of the Caribbean Basin Initiative and to insist – somewhat misleadingly – that Mexico and Venezuela were "sponsoring countries" of this US venture.

Venezuela and Mexico have not ignored political and economic factors in granting assistance. For instance, its border dispute with Venezuela helps explain Guyana's absence from the facility. Caracas also is weary about Grenada's revolutionary regime; yet, the absence of a refinery on the postage stamp-sized island gives a sound justification for excluding it from a facility established to export crude to beneficiaries. Nonetheless, Venezuela's Christian Democratic administration has aided the Sandinistas whom it often criticized; and Mexico has supplied the governments of Guatemala and El Salvador, despite refugee and ▶

border problems with the former, and an ideological conflict with the latter that has found the **PRI**, Mexico's official party, cultivating the Salvadoran opposition.

Belt-tightening in Mexico and Venezuela means that the facility will be modified significantly in mid-1983. The maximum volume of oil supplied by each nation may be reduced from 80,000 BPD to 60,000, more or less the amount now delivered. The rebate may fall from 30 to 20 percent of the commercial price; this change would leave the value of concessional aid essentially intact because of the \$ 5.00 per barrel price drop in 1983. Meanwhile, the stabilization of oil prices offers some relief to the recipients.

The donors may also double the interest rate on five-year credits to eight percent and cut from 20 to 15 years the long-term loans on which the interest charge would triple to six percent. If a country such as Guatemala were found to be self-sufficient in oil, it would be eliminated from the facility. discussion has also focused on technical assistance, equipment, and resources to spur hydrocarbon exploration in recipient nations through a trilateral company, **PETROLATIN**,

constituted by the state oil companies of Brazil, Mexico, and Venezuela. The formation of, and the promulgation of projects by, what at best will be a loosely organized firm remains highly speculative.

Might the program be sacrificed on the altar of economic necessity? Despite misgivings by an array of business, labor, and bureaucratic groups in Venezuela and, to a lesser extent, Mexico, termination seems improbable because the scheme has advanced important, mainly political, goals of the two nations; namely, (1) providing resources to countries which run chronic balance of trade deficits with the donors, (2) encouraging energy nationalism through government-to-government accords in the oil sector, (3) promoting economic stability – or, at least, militating against instability – in a region afflicted by civil strife, (4) offering a means for relatively developed states anxious to avoid revolution to influence, if not moderate, the actions of Nicaragua's sandinistas, (5) demonstrating that Latin Americans can help each other without Washington's involvement, (6) enhancing the donors' international prestige by providing foreign aid with "no

strings attached," (7) emphasizing that political problems spring from continuous economic crises suffered by small, energy-dependent nations, (8) embedding a vital stone in a mosaic of international cooperation, thereby indirectly criticizing the OPEC's unresponsiveness to granting preferential treatment to Third World consumers.

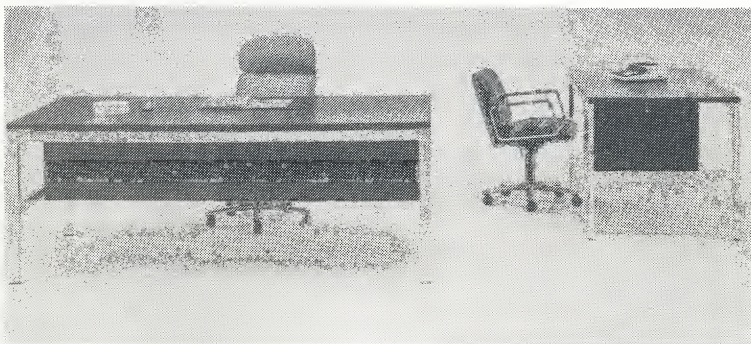
With respect to the last point, especially salient to Mexico, Oteyza commented: "First Mexico and Venezuela signed the agreement to supply the Central American and Caribbean region with petroleum on favorable conditions. Now we are succeeding in achieving, with the **OLADE** (Latin American Energy organization) framework, the introduction of a Latin American energy cooperation program. And this is how we will continue to work, in the hope that we will eventually be able to work at a worldwide level, which is the ultimate objective."

As the donors revise the terms, the recipients must emphasize conservation, intensify exploration for domestic energy supplies, and become more proficient in fashioning development projects that merit funding. ■

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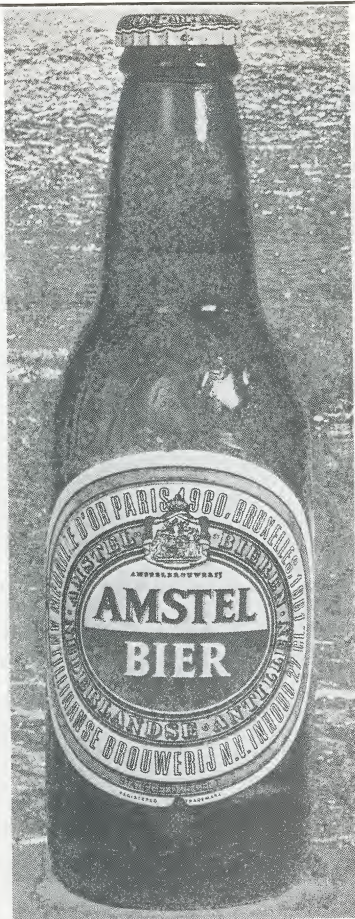
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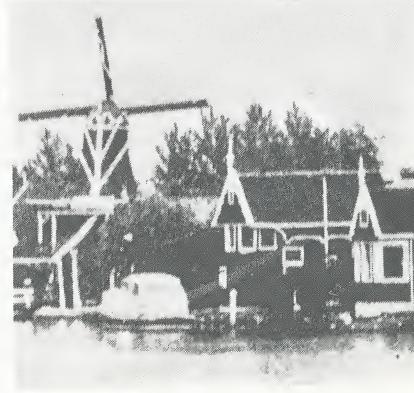
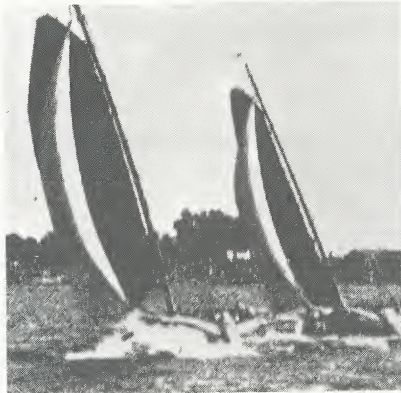
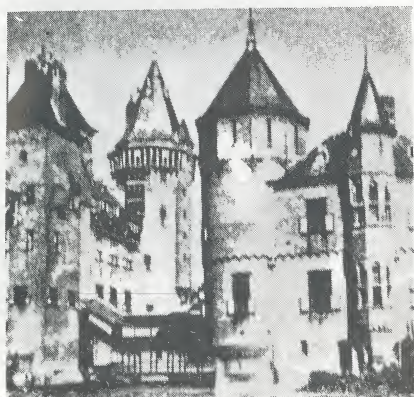
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